

GENDER SENSITIVE TEACHING

A MANUAL FOR EDUCATORS

With a foreword by

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Foreword

This manual is an indispensable tool for all those working on gender and the issue of girls' rights and gender equality. This is a manual to be read and internalised by one and all. Specifically, it focuses on school teachers, who could play an important role in establishing the norm that all children are equal and that there should not be any kind of gender inequality. It explains how there has been a practice of gender inequality at every step; how girls are discriminated against in urban slums and in rural households inadvertently by the parents and siblings; and how they have to be aware that this is gender discrimination. It emphasises the need for girls to have a space of their own, that girls have been suppressed – unable to express what they want; that girls have been burdened with all kinds of domestic work and more importantly, that they have been discriminated against where boys are preferred and girls are not.

There are workshops in the manual, and tools and activities through which teachers are made aware of the discrimination that happens on the homefront. The sensitisation tools and activities are indeed very important – and these can be taken up not just by teachers, but I believe even by activists working on gender issues, especially for girls' right to education.

Indeed, it is not just households that practice gender discrimination – it is so pervasive. We can see in the various chapters and activities given in this manual that the practice of gender discrimination also exists in public spaces. I believe it is very important that one looks at the public spaces, and where it is that girls do not feel comfortable. Thus, you find in the manual the issue of gender discrimination in the household, in public spaces, and more importantly, in schools. Not many of us recognise that schools are also spaces where girls and boys are seen differently. This difference is hidden and invisibilized, that not many are conscious about it. The tasks allotted to boys in school are so different from the ones allotted to girls. While the boys are completely given the responsibility for holding public and sports functions and even for speaking up for their peers, girls are usually hidden. They often do not play sports and games, and are asked to sweep the floor and maintain the school premises. Through the exercises that the manual has so comprehensively laid out, one sees that schools too becomes sites for gender discrimination. In this sense, schools and school teachers have an important role in correcting the issue of gender violence and discrimination.

The manual is a testimony to such sites of conflict. It clearly spells out the aspects of patriarchy that determine our behaviour as a society. It shows how each one of us has internalised the social norms of patriarchy, and tells us that one will have to combat patriarchy and create a world that is based on gender equality. In

this context, it talks about not just the binaries of boys and girls—it sensitises school teachers to help them recognise the fact that there is not just this binary but there are multiple genders which one will have to recognise and support—especially in the context of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Further, it also talks about how even men are victims of patriarchy—how masculinity determines what men should do, and how it encourages behaviour that dehumanises men. Men become the protectors, they are expected to be ambitious, they have to play a role of power and authority, and they have to live up to certain standards which patriarchy forces or imposes on them. They are not allowed to become caregivers, which they might want to do. They may not even experience certain emotions of deep sensitivity because masculinity does not allow them to be themselves. The issue of masculinity has also been addressed in the manual, and it provides solutions through its tools as to how one has to overcome these restrictive ideas of masculinity.

I also want to mention how the manual emphasises that the values in the society about gender inequality and patriarchy will be changed only through training children to be supportive of the principle of equality. The emphasis on schools as institutions that create new values and influence values in the outside world is very important. Throughout history, we have seen that institutions such as schools—that are mirrors of the value system outside—have had the ability to change the value system when there is a conscious effort of training teachers and children to imbibe the values of equality. So in a sense, it is an investment in children to practice gender equality in the classroom since it impacts their families and the public spaces they occupy. We must celebrate the freedom and mobility of girls and ultimately create a condition where humanistic values get internalised by one and all.

What is special about this manual is that it is not complex. Although there is an underlying theory in every chapter, it shows in an extraordinary manner through examples and discussion, how we practise gender inequality and internalise the values of patriarchy. The manual is special because of the activities that it has devised at the end of every chapter. This manual should be useful for school teachers and more importantly, for anyone who reads it and wants to put gender equality into practice.



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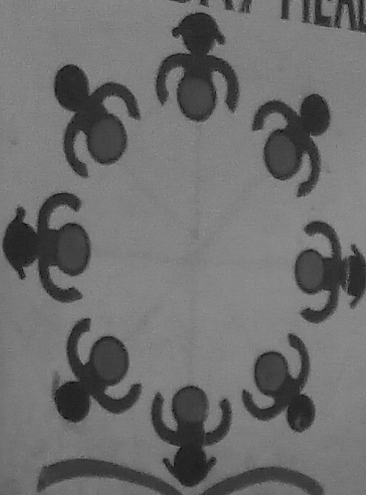
February 2022

Hyderabad



MID-DAY-MEALS

Weekly menu of Mid Day Meals



Monday: Rice with Tomato/Cucumber/Bellground/Vegetable Dhal (or Dal)
 Tuesday: Rice with Vegetable korma/ Saffron
 Wednesday: Rice with Vegetable Sambar/ Saffron
 Thursday: Rice with Aloo Matar/ Aloo Sabarban Curry/ Saffron
 Friday: Rice with Dalak Dahi/ Saffron
 Saturday: Rice with Aloo Tamatar/ Aloo Tamatar/ Aloo Tamatar/ Saffron
 Special Rice includes Veg Biryani/ Tamatar/ Tamatar/ Tamatar/ Saffron
 Pickle, Egg and Banana Biscuits will be supplied once a week

Mid Day Meals Scheme

Sl. No.	Food Item	Quantity	Approx. Price
1	Food Grains (Wheat/Rice)	100 gm	150 paise
2	Pulses	50 gm	50 paise
3	Vegetables	50 gm	75 paise
4	Oil & Fat	5 gm	7.5 paise
5	Salt & Condiments	As per need	As per need
6	Fuel		

HYDERABAD DISTRICT





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We also thank Maithreyi and Amena, who conducted the baseline surveys and helped in managing and administering the virtual training sessions. Our sincere thanks to Mrs Subhashini Potluri, Education Program Manager at Kriti Social Initiatives: she played a vital role in liaising for and supervising the master trainers' workshop in December 2020, as well as developing training content for and overseeing the community level workshops subsequently conducted by our master trainers.

We thank the administrative staff at Maulana Azad National Urdu University for allowing us to use their premises for team meetings, as well as the team at Study in India Program (SIP) at University of Hyderabad for letting us use their premises for conducting the master trainers' training in December 2020.

Lastly, we are grateful to Neha Vaddadi, who designed this manual. We would also like to acknowledge the UNESCO manual titled *Strengthening gender sensitive practices and programming in community radio*¹ for serving as a reference for a manual addressing gender-sensitivity and gender equality.

¹Malik, Kanchan K. and Vinod Pavarala. *Strengthening gender sensitive practices and programming in community radio*, UNESCO, 2021. URL: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379941.locale=en>. Accessed 19 February 2022.

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Introduction

The intersections of class, caste, religion and other socio-economic parameters continue to challenge state and non-state interventions in Indian education. While the state has attempted to provide equitable access to primary education through policy (e.g. the Right to Education Act) it is harder for teachers to implement equitable education in the classroom. In India, we face the challenge of having teachers with little or no training in sensitivity to gender or other identity markers, especially at the preprimary and primary level. There is a thin line between socialisation in the family and school and many prejudices and stereotypes are shaped at this stage in both contexts. In the family, teachers may be children or siblings or parents and their roles there intersect with their roles as teachers. What we learn as children may carry on into adulthood as well. The culture of the family will certainly influence the culture of the classroom. In this Project *Samatha* ('equality'), funded by the US Consulate Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund, we tried to reach disadvantaged children in a part of Hyderabad with a mixed population of Hindus and Muslims, by providing socially sensitive teacher training to both male and female teachers. This training was designed to sensitise and equip teachers with the ideas and skills required to meet the larger goal of nurturing and raising a more egalitarian child. A child that does not think there are privileges that are particular to being male or female. A child that sees the world as a place of opportunities for all and not a place that judges one's future according to their gender.

We conducted teacher training workshops and training-of-trainers (ToT), focusing on teachers working with children from resource-poor families either at free government schools or at affordable private schools. A related goal was to develop a cadre of master trainers who will act as influencers in the larger teacher community in this area. Gender sensitization is a major goal that drove our Project *Samatha*. As an extension of our efforts, we created this manual to capture the topics and activities that were a part of our workshops, in order to help other educators conduct their own workshops in their schools and neighbourhoods. The twin goals of this manual are to address the lack of proper teacher training with respect to gender, highlight for them the inherent inequalities present

Project Samatha workshop sessions were recorded and are available online for viewing. Please scan this QR code to access them.



in the pre-primary and primary classroom, and to sensitise teachers to the cognitive and sociocultural challenges faced by children from disadvantaged communities, particularly in terms of gender-related inequities.

In this manual, we want to emphasize that gender is not viewed as a binary: male and female are not opposing entities but two ends of a spectrum. The social construction of gender enables a process of gendering wherein we perform the characteristics of a gender. If a child cross-dresses, society assumes that there is something wrong as they are not complying to the codes of the gender binary. The third gender or transgender have often been either neglected in society or completely ignored. Masculinity or 'becoming a boy' and femininity or 'becoming a girl' are learnt through the process of socialisation. Therefore, gender differences are not innate or natural: if we learn how to behave like a man or a woman, there is scope to unlearn this behaviour as well. Children are socialised by different social institutions such as family, play groups, educational and religious institutions, to name a few. The NCF Position Paper on Gender Issues in Education (2006) also states that empowerment in education implies:

- promoting self-recognition, a positive self-image and self-actualisation
- stimulating critical thinking in children
- deepening understanding of the gendered structures of power
- enabling access to resources, specially to an expanding framework of information and knowledge
- developing the ability to analyse the options available, and to facilitate the possibility of making informed choices

Reinforcing the agency of girls can help them challenge gendered structures of power and take control of their lives.

Why teachers?

Teachers are important members of both the school and the community, and play a major role in shaping the attitudes and ideologies of children—and through them, their parents. The school as an institution has been a major area where one learns to be patriarchal or show an attitude of male domination. Teachers have the advantage of being outside of the family and are often role models for children. As teachers themselves are the products of traditional gender stereotypes and hierarchies, they may form stereotypes that affect the ways in which children grow up. Girls and women may also hold gender stereotypes, so as female teachers we are not devoid of the danger of falling into such thinking. In doing so, they often do not realise what impact they can have on children. “You are a girl you need to take care of your family” is something they have heard a million times and may dangerously carry forward, not only in the family but also in the classroom.

Teachers are the vehicles of change, and every generation has a different kind of bond with the teacher. The role of teachers in enabling change is immense and it is useful to take advantage of this situation to move ahead. Often, teachers are women—especially at the primary school level—as teaching young children is considered an extension of childcare.

Care occupations have been extremely gendered and underpaid since ancient times. Even when men are in caring occupations such as teaching and nursing, they get paid less because of this notion that these are “women’s jobs”--a concept known in gender studies as ‘feminisation of labour’. As Kamla Bhasin put it, a woman does not cook with her womb, she only gives birth with it. So anybody can cook, anybody can play and anybody can teach and learn.

Through this manual, we want teachers to spend time thinking about gender and how it affects our teaching practices, as well as how we can make our classrooms and our teaching more gender-sensitive. We want to encourage them to discuss and understand an area which has not been talked about much in relation to schools and teaching:

- **Discuss gender sensitivity**

In simple terms, how do we bring equality into our schools and classrooms? How do we give girls and boys an equal chance through our teaching practises? How do we help them fight male dominance and the patriarchy or the idea that men are somehow superior to women?

- **Importance of these changes to our teaching practises**

We briefly touch upon how gender sensitive teaching practises can have a lasting impact on children throughout their academic lives, affecting their choices both within and outside the area of education. Through this manual, we aim to paint a bigger picture as to why gender-sensitive classrooms are important.

As a long-term goal, teachers can have gender equality goals for their students:

1. **An egalitarian atmosphere in the classroom**

Teachers have to check their own socialisation and not allow themselves to pass on attitudes that easily come normally to them. For example, boys should be told about cooking skills and housework as a natural process. Girls should be free and not be controlled or scolded if they talk loudly. Teachers should allow organic classroom seating, where children sit with whoever they wish to, instead of dividing them according to gender. Teachers cannot assume that boys are better at numbers than girls, or that girls are naturally more caring than boys. For kindergarten and primary school teachers, new gender-neutral toys can be provided and language training can be done. Teachers should discuss personal hygiene quite freely with everyone without embarrassing the girl children.

2. **Encourage physical fitness and sports for all children**

Sports are usually very gendered and both parents and teachers must work hard to help build physical fitness in all children especially after the pandemic. Incentives for participation in physical training must be provided and teachers can often become positive role models for the children.

3. **Start looking at each other as normal human beings**

Here, teachers have to help children become comfortable with their own bodies and those of the other genders. Show movie clips and discuss what to do and what not to do.

4. Work with parents

Involve mothers and fathers and treat them as partners on the road to gender equality, rather than the opposition. Build incentives for helping girls come out more and work with boys. Further, teachers must consider the role of both parents in raising children, not that of mothers alone.

The divide between generations has grown: some aspects of this have been good (like our children being economically better off), but ideas about gender are changing, as they must. There are simple things in the classroom and there are complicated things; no matter where our students come from, certain attitudes remain and develop in their heads. Our job as teachers is to try and remove the barrier of gender for all our students, regardless of where they come from. Gender-sensitive classrooms are not an option anymore, but a necessity. The larger goal of the workshop that we conducted is to move away from patriarchy and towards equality. It does not matter if you teach mathematics or Telugu: what matters is how we treat somebody, and how they change things when their turn arrives.

Over the course of these modules, we will try to understand how we can change our teaching practices and our attitudes in everyday interactions with our students. We begin our discussion in Chapter 1, where we discuss what gender is: how it is different from sex, and how we must learn to detangle the two if we are to understand how gender roles are made to seem natural while they are in fact very much a social construct. With this awareness, we move to Chapter 2, to discuss how gender can often become a barrier that limits our pursuits, dreams and ambitions and how we can identify these barriers in our everyday lives to then attempt to help others and ourselves work towards our hopes and ambitions despite these barriers. In Chapter 3, we focus on how the classroom often becomes the site of these gender-based barriers, and how we, as teachers, need to be aware of some of our behaviours, teaching practices and tools that play a role in making the classroom and the school an unequal playing field for girls. We also provide some tools to help teachers inculcate more gender-responsive teaching practices in their classrooms and schools. In Chapter 4, we discuss how gender affects boys and men as well, examine the role of popular culture and media in glorifying toxic masculinity, and suggest talking points and discussions that teachers can have with boys as a continuing conversation throughout their journey through school.

Each chapter has callout boxes that raise a series of questions relating to the material they have just read. The purpose of these questions is to engage the reader in a small discussion that can help them ponder over some of the larger questions and implications that the corresponding topic opens up. Readers have the option of thinking through these questions alone, or discussing them with colleagues, parents, and their students (where appropriate). We have included these questions to generate conversation and discussion around important gender-related concepts without necessarily needing supplies and carved-out time to conduct the more

full-fledged activities given at the end of each chapter. The activities on the other hand provide a chance for more in-depth discussion and can be used by teachers when they conduct gender sensitisation workshops for their colleagues, for parents and perhaps even for older students. The list of additional resources provided at the end of each chapter can be referred to in order to further enhance understanding of the concepts introduced in that chapter. These resources can also be used to experiment with various kinds of talking points and activities that trainers and teachers may like to take up when they conduct their own workshops.

It would be important to highlight here that this manual is meant only as a starting point for our readers: as with the conversation around gender and pedagogy, the field of gender-responsive pedagogy is also ever-expanding and we encourage teachers to explore the same and stay abreast with the different ways in which we can make our classrooms and our schools a more equitable, inclusive, and supportive environment for every child that we teach and interact with. We sincerely hope this manual is able to equip teachers with the knowledge and basic tools necessary for this very important task ahead of them.



Chapter 1

WHAT IS GENDER?



Image credits: KRITI



Understanding Gender

What is gender? We often use the words **gender** and **sex** interchangeably, often to signal to others and ourselves that we are a woman, a man—and for some of us—that we are both, or that we are neither. In this manual however, we go beyond the everyday definition of gender to reveal that gender and sex can in fact be understood as two separate concepts. The way we understand it, gender is a word in the English language that moves away from the limiting concept of sex. Sex is usually constant throughout one's life—unless there is a sex change operation—whereas gender can be variable. At different points through our lives, we may relate to or feel more like one gender than any other, and this could remain the same throughout our lives, or it could change with time. Gender is what we may call a **“socio-cultural construct”**—meaning it is made up based on the society and culture that we live in—and might vary in different cultures. It is interesting that most Indian languages use the word sex to include gender, so there is a danger of biological essentialization (or making biology the foundation of the concept of gender). Sex is a biological construct—that is, your sex is determined by the body you were born with, male, female, or something that does not neatly fit into these pre-determined categories—but **gender is a social and cultural construct**.

What does this mean? It means that the concept of gender is learned through a process of socialisation, or the process through which we learn how to behave in ways that are acceptable to society, at different stages of the life cycle and through different institutions that an individual is a part of. How does one learn gender? From the time that woman conceives, she and everyone around her is wondering and made to wonder about the sex of the baby. Minutes after coming into the world, the baby is designated as male or female and ostracised if it does not fit into one of these two categories. Some societies rejoice if it is a son more than if it is a daughter. Violence against the female gender starts with aborting the female foetus for want of a male child, or infanticide or starvation of a female child. But even in a society which thinks of itself as not having any obvious gender biases, there are many ways in which differences and hierarchies are established.

Through imitation and role play, as well as by adapting to the norms and rules of the society that we live in, we learn the qualities of life which are gendered even though they are not biological. We would like to encourage you to think of the concept of gender as being on a continuum or a spectrum, and not as a binary between female and male. So in this book, we would use 'they' as a pronoun rather than 'her/his' as much as possible. As we grow up, through constantly hearing and seeing the same ideas around what men and women should and can do, we slowly begin to blur the lines between our physical characteristics related to our biological sex, and what is taught to us as being socially

acceptable behaviour for us based on whether we were born as a certain sex. Often, we end up thinking of these socially dictated terms of behaviours as 'natural' or biological, when in fact they have nothing to do with our sex.

Group Discussion 1

Girls and boys/ Women and men: what's the difference?

Think about these questions and have a discussion:

Is there a difference between the food eaten by/given to boys and food eaten by/given to girls? If so, why? Is this all right, or should it change?

Is there a difference in the games girls and boys play? Why do they think that is?

Is there a difference in the movies girls/women and boys/men watch? Why so?

Is there a difference in the work girls/women and boys/men watch do at home? Why?

Do we reward boys and girls for different things?

Don't we need to have the same reward and punishment for both?

Let us do this quick activity to shed some light on how girls and boys, and men and women behave different from one another:

To understand just how sex and gender are actually different, try this activity – you can do this by yourself, or as a group:

Make a list of behaviours and characteristics that you associate with women and men. You should end up with two columns that look something like this:

Men	Women
Strong	Emotional
Rational	Caring
Aggressive	Docile
Breadwinner	Homemaker
Moustache	Breasts
Stoic	Childbearer
Protector	Nurturer

Feel free to add more characteristics to these columns until you find that you have exhausted all the answers you could come with.

Now, go ahead and switch the two column headings.
Your columns should look something like this:

Women	Men
Strong	Emotional
Rational	Caring
Aggressive	Docile
Breadwinner	Homemaker
Moustache	Breasts
Stoic	Childbearer
Protector	Nurturer

What do you think of the two columns now? Do the entries still make sense even when you flip the gender? You will see that most of them do: in fact, many of us know of men and women who display these qualities from the 'opposite' column. Think about it: you may know women who are breadwinners, men who are more emotional than rational (remember, anger is also an emotion); or you may know of aggressive women and men who have more of a nurturing streak than their female counterparts.

In fact, you will see that apart from a handful of physical characteristics (childbearing or breasts in the case of women, or moustache and fathering children in the case of men), most of these traits and characteristics actually are applicable to both men and women—in fact, we even know of many such men and women who do not conform to the expectations from them due to their gender.

Hopefully, this quick activity has highlighted how important it is to critically look at gender and gender roles that we have grown up with: all the traits we think are 'natural' to being a man or a woman are actually not tied to our 'being' a man or a woman at all. This is the first step towards questioning many of these harmful stereotypes in our own lives, because the fact that we learn to associate these behaviours with a particular gender means that we can unlearn these ideas as well. Let us further examine gender roles and how we internalise them to think of them as 'natural' in this next section.



Image credits: KRITI

Gender Roles

Let us do a small activity to understand how we assign unknowingly gender-specific roles to men and women due to our socialisation.

Food for Thought: Gender roles

*Close your eyes and visualise the scenes described below.
Then answer the questions following the statements:*

a) R looked up to see that the water was boiling. R went to the kitchen and put tea leaves and made tea for the entire family. R then called for everyone to come to the dining room and get tea and biscuits.

Did you imagine R as male or female?
Why so?

b) B picked up the bag and said “I am getting late for college”. B walked outside where X was waiting outside with a motorbike. B sat behind X on the bike and they left.

Did you imagine B as male or female?
What about X? Why so?

From the scenarios above, we can understand that we connect certain roles and behaviours with one gender more than another. As discussed before, whether these roles are played by men and women is ingrained deeply in our minds due to our socialisation.

A further essentializing is done by proclaiming innate qualities in individuals that are gendered. Statements such as “boys will be boys” that give license to perpetuating gender inequality come from a mixing of the concept of sex and gender. This includes saying that girls know how to sew or cook, and boys can kick a ball well. By examining gender as a cultural construct, we seek to show that the process of learning to be male, female or transgender is not just physical or psychological. Children are socialised, or taught, to become girls and boys by taking on gender roles which are literally prescribed by various agencies of socialisation such as the family, the community, and the school.

Understanding that gender is different from sex is important, as is the fact that we learn these roles and traits associated with our assigned gender at birth over time as we grow up by imitating others. This means that these roles are not actually ‘natural’: and realising and accepting this is the first step for us to look beyond what we have come to accept as ‘natural’ or ‘correct’ behaviour for us as a man or a woman. Once we unlearn these ideas, we can begin thinking of ourselves and others as not being confined by what is ‘expected’ by virtue of one’s gender, but rather as individuals as their own unique ambitions, likes, dislikes, goals, and ways

of expression. With this understanding, we can better support our students in their journey to young adulthood by helping them become confident, content and fulfilled individuals in their own right, regardless of their gender.

Summary

Sex and gender are two different concepts: while sex is a biological category that depends on the body we are born in, gender is a social and cultural construct that teaches us a set of behaviours and traits based on whether we were born a man or woman.

We learn these behaviours through the process of socialisation, and though these ideas are so pervasive that we often think of them as 'natural' behaviour for men or women, this is not true.

Gender is a construct that often leads to harmful stereotypes that affect both women and men. It can be unlearned through critical questioning of the ideas that are passed down to us as 'natural'. The word gender is not different from sex in most Indian languages.

Additional Resources

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4. Karunakar, Gopini, *Moon in the Pot*, Mango, DC Books, 2008.
5. *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: Module for Master Trainers*. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, 2015, pp. 37-43. URL: <https://wcd.nic.in/bbbp-schemes/trainers-training-module-english>. Accessed 07 February 2022.
6. T. Raghav, S. Seema, M. Merlin. "Annexure 7: Deconstructing common gender myths" *Understanding Gender: A training module for teachers*. Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT), 2014, pp. 75-76. URL: <https://bit.ly/37lCxWq> Accessed 07 February 2022.
7. *Ammayi: Life Of a Girl short film on Gender sensitisation*, Channel: Paisa Creation, Date of upload: 28 April 2016, YouTube. URL: <https://youtu.be/kun2sFSVPaA>. Accessed on 02 February 2022.



Image credits: KRITI



Activities for Your Workshop

Activity 1: Setting the Context

.....

Duration: **30 minutes**

Methods: **Freestyle discussion**

FOR THE FACILITATOR(S):

This introductory session is meant to acquaint the participants with the aims and objectives of the workshop, as well as to set the tone for the sessions ahead. As facilitator(s), look to cover the following areas in a simple, conversational manner in your initial interaction with the participants:

- ***Why we are here:*** to spend time thinking about gender and how it affects our teaching practices, as well as how we can make our classrooms and our teaching more gender-sensitive.
- ***What we want to do during this workshop:*** to discuss and understand an area which has not been talked about much in relation to schools and teaching.
- ***Discuss gender sensitivity:*** in simple terms, talk about the concept that the workshop aims to tackle: how do we bring equity into our schools and classrooms? How do we give girls and boys an equal chance through our teaching practices?
- ***Why these changes to our teaching practices are important:*** briefly touch upon how gender sensitive teaching practices can have a lasting impact on children throughout their academic lives, affecting their choices both within and outside the area of education. Paint a bigger picture as to why gender-sensitive classrooms are important.

Go over the workshop timings with the participants so that everyone is aware of the commitment expected of them over the course of the workshop.

Activity 2: Introductions

Duration: **45 minutes**

Methods: **Freestyle discussion, group activity**

FOR THE FACILITATOR(S):

1. Go over the workshop timings with the participants so that everyone is aware of the commitment expected of them over the course of the workshop. Some other topics you may want to address before moving on to the next activity are:
 - **What are some of the things you would welcome from them?** share with the participants what you, as facilitator(s), expect with regards to participation, raising questions, completing assignments, empathetic and patient listening, switching mobile phones off during the sessions.
 - **What are some of the things they would welcome from you during and after the workshop?** Ask the participants if they would like to establish certain expectations as you begin, which can be revisited collectively at the end of the workshop.
2. Conduct an icebreaker activity with the participants: ask participants to sit in a circle. Each person must introduce themselves by telling the group their name and something about themselves. Go around the circle until everyone has introduced themselves in this manner.



Activity 3: Gender or Sex?

Duration: **45 minutes**

Methods: **Group activity, freestyle discussion**

1. On the blackboard, make two columns titled '**Men**' and '**Women**'. Ask the participants to help you fill up each column with the traits, behaviours, and characteristics most associated with the respective gender. The list will probably look something like this:

WOMEN	MEN
Delicate	Muscular
Docile	Domineering
Mother (provides ovum)	Father (provides sperm)
Sensitive	Good looking
Housework	Breadwinner
Caring	Controlling
Bears children	Honour
Love	Protector
Sari	Pants and shirt
Long hair	Beard
Cries easily	Aggressive
Jealous	Strong
Breastfeeds	Drinks alcohol/smokes

2. Make sure the traits highlighted in bold above (childbearing, breastfeeding) are included in the table. If the participants do not think of these, you can bring them up and ask where they can go in the table. Apart from this, do not prompt for any other traits, and do not make any changes to what they are suggesting.

3. Once the participants are satisfied with the two columns, go ahead and switch the titles: **'Men'** should now be **'Women'** and vice versa. It will look something like this:

MEN	WOMEN
Delicate	Muscular
Docile	Domineering
Mother (provides ovum)	Father (provides sperm)
Sensitive	Good looking
Housework	Breadwinner
Caring	Controlling
Bears children	Honour
Love	Protector
Sari	Pants and shirt
Long hair	Beard
Cries easily	Aggressive
Jealous	Strong
Breastfeeds	Drinks alcohol/smokes

4. Now ask the participants which traits do not belong in the new columns. For every gender trait that is a stereotype/popular perception, ask them if they can recall seeing or hearing of an exception. For example:

- *Do you know men or boys who cry easily?*
- *Have you heard of or known women who are breadwinners for their family?*
- *Have you seen or heard of men cooking, cleaning etc. (cooks, chefs, housekeepers etc.)?*
- *Can you think of any aggressive, strong women in your social circles or community?*

5. By the end of this discussion, guide the participants to realise that the only characteristics that do not belong in the new columns are the ones which are controlled by the sexual characteristics of men and women: providing the ovum or sperm; childbearing; and breastfeeding. **Apart from these, all 'manly' or 'womanly' characteristics can easily be seen in the other gender.** Emphasise on this point.
6. Now close the activity by talking to the participants about the difference in **sex** and **gender**.



Chapter 2

GENDER AS A BARRIER



Image credits: KRITI



Introduction

In the previous chapter, we discussed the concept of gender, and how gender roles become a regular part of our life and influence our behaviours and choices. However, these gender roles often lead to gender stereotypes and entrenched ideas around how men and women should act, which end up posing very real challenges for people—especially women and non-binary people. In this chapter, we will try and look at the world around us with our awareness of the restrictive nature of gender roles in order to understand how gender can actively impede the ambitions and potential of many of us every day.

Women make up slightly more than half the population in India, with the 2021 census showing a sex ratio of 1020 females for every 1000 males. So you would think that everywhere you go, you would see as many women as men, or as many girls as boys. But look around you: is that the case in all spheres of life, in all professions, and in all fields of activity?

India's Supreme Court currently has 34 judges, only four of whom are women. The 25 High Courts in the country have a total of 677 judges; just 81 of these are women. Five states do not have a single female judge. Following the 2019 union elections, women make up 14% of elected parliamentary representatives. Globally, women form 22.4% of the representatives in parliamentary democracies. It was only in 2021 that the National Defence Academy began to admit a small number of women cadets. Every year, proud coaching academies display the pictures of candidates securing ranks in competitive examinations. You can usually count on one hand the number of girls on those posters and advertisements.

Flip through the pages of a daily newspaper. How many women do you see featured outside the entertainment and society sections?

Food for Thought: The Missing Women

Women make up 48.1% of the population.

23.6% of women aged 15 years and above are in the workforce (versus 78.6% of men).

In 2018, only 26% of surveyed companies had women in the top positions in the past ten years.

Women earn only 65% of what men in the same roles earn (in many fields).

Do you think this gender distribution in the workforce is truly representative, given women make up more than half the population? Why/why not? What would a truly representative workforce look like, in your opinion? Think about some changes your school would need to make to be a more representative and gender-responsive workplace. Discuss how these changes could be made given the current situation in your school.

(From: Catalyst, Quick Takes: Women in the Workforce, 2019)



We see women prominently in fields like teaching and caregiving (nursing, daycare, etc.) and men prominently in fields that involve some level of physical strength. Even in a field like medicine, where a higher number of girls are admitted to medical colleges each year, by the time they graduate and go into the profession, there is a huge drop in their numbers. If you look at the list of consultants listed on the walls of any large hospital, you'll find a very small number of women, especially outside a few fields like reproductive health or child health.

Food for Thought: Our Ambitions - I

Talk to the children in your neighbourhood, both boys and girls, and also to their parents.

What are the children's dreams?

What are their parents' dreams for them?

Is there a difference between what they want and expect for their male and female children?

Why is there a difference?



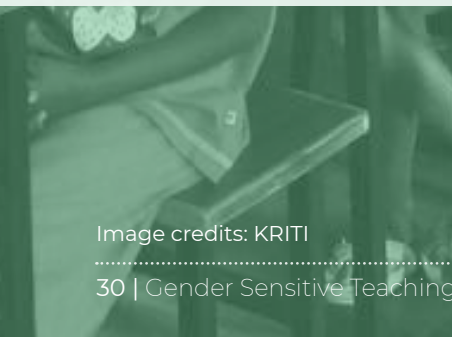
Let's think about this for a moment. Why is there this difference? Why is it that girls are encouraged to go into certain fields and boys into others? Why is it that there are so few females (and even fewer transgender or queer people) visible in positions of authority and leadership?

Food for Thought: Our Ambitions - II

Think about your own achievements and dreams.

List at least three challenges you overcame and three things that prevented you from doing what you wanted.

Do you think things would have been different for you if you were of a different gender?



Does gender make a difference?

We have seen in the previous chapter that while sex is biological (based on the presence of certain physical characteristics), gender is a social construct (based on beliefs and social norms). Gender plays a large role in how we experience the world, and what opportunities are open to us from childhood through adulthood, in our personal and professional lives. The deeply held beliefs about how males and females should be lead to unspoken but commonly understood rules about behaviour, what we call gender norms. Right from a very early age, parents, family elders, and neighbours reinforce these norms. It's common to hear a grandmother scold an overactive granddaughter, "Calm down, behave like a girl!" or a sensitive boy, "You have to be strong, you have to take care of the family when you grow up!"

Gender norms dictate how children should behave, what they can do and not do as they grow up, and how their lives should be as adults. Of course, much has changed over the years and there are certainly many more opportunities available to both boys and girls, as well as a growing recognition that some people may not fall into the strict categories of male and female. But the pace of change has been slow, and most opportunities are still available only to a very small section of the Indian society.

If we are to overcome barriers, it is important to first recognize them and understand how they work, so that we can begin to make the changes that will lead to a more equitable society where everyone has opportunities to reach their full potential, irrespective of where they come from and who/what they are. One way to understand how gender functions as a barrier, or how it limits an individual, is to look at how differences between girls and boys are imposed—and experienced—across the life cycle. This becomes even more complicated in the case of persons who identify as non-binary, who cannot or do not wish to put themselves clearly into either the male or female category.

In the family

Some people would argue that gender discrimination—and therefore the creation of barriers for girls—begins even before birth. The traditional blessing or wish to a newly married woman is "may you bear many sons", suggesting that the boy child is much more welcome. This attitude has resulted in many cases where a woman is harassed or shunned for not bearing a male child. The film '*Muskan*' shows how a young girl reacts when she finds that her mother is being treated badly by the family because she may be carrying another girl child. Despite the presence of laws that ban sex-selective abortion,² making it illegal for doctors to reveal the gender of the foetus after an ultrasound scan, the practice continues in many parts of the country, placing women and the foetus at great risk.

²"Sex-Selective Abortion in India." *Population Research Institute*, URL: <https://www.pop.org/sex-selective-abortion-in-india/>. Accessed 09 February 2022.

Group Discussion 2

Gender in the Family

Watch the short film *Muskan*.

Discuss how the mother in the story is treated.

How does the young girl react to the situation?

How do you think the situation affects the girl and her ideas about gender and being a girl in society?

After birth, girls continue to face challenges on many levels. In families where there is scarcity of resources, there is an unequal distribution between children, with girls often seen as “paraya dhan” (stranger’s property) who have only temporary residence within the birth home and are to be protected or tolerated until they marry and leave. As such, they are often the last to be fed, receive a lower priority when it comes to education, and lack a say in decisions about their future. They take on a higher share of caregiving responsibilities, with older girl children at times leaving school to take care of younger siblings so that both parents can go to work. A nationwide survey conducted by Naandi³ found that over half of all teenage girls were anaemic and underweight, suggesting that there are disparities in their access to nourishing food within a household. In many families, women do not have control over the finances, even when they have a job, they may not have a say in how their income is used.

In society or the community

We often hear the term “it’s a man’s world”--meaning, most systems are set up for and by men. This includes not just the physical spaces but also the conventions and expectations of public behaviour. On buses and metro trains, there are usually small areas reserved for women passengers which seems to tell us that only a few women are expected to be in these spaces. You will have noticed that you almost never see young women standing around on the street, or outside buildings, just talking to each other and “hanging out”. On the other hand, we see groups of young boys very comfortably gathering on street corners or lounging outside cinema theatres.

The public spaces that are available for recreation—parks, playgrounds, maidans—are almost exclusively occupied by boys and men. There is a general feeling that women and girls do not “belong” in such spaces. They are actively discouraged from using these spaces for reasons of safety and security. Some spaces are marked as “dangerous” for girls, because they are poorly lit after dark and relatively lonely. Girls are also asked to dress in certain socially acceptable ways as they may otherwise attract unwanted attention or disapproval.

³Kulkarni, Pragati. “Half Of Indian Teenage Girls Underweight, Anaemic, Without Sanitary Menstrual Protection” *IndiaSpend*, October 2018, URL: <https://www.indiaspend.com/half-of-indian-teenage-girls-underweight-anaemic-without-sanitary-menstrual-protection/>. Accessed 09 February 2022.

Food for Thought: How would you respond?

A group of female college students writes to the administration complaining that they feel unsafe when they walk back from the lab after dark. Both male and female students often have to stay back to complete their experiments and need to walk through a lonely stretch to the gate of the college. They have found that boys from other departments, and even college staff, sometimes pass comments when they are walking. They request that there be better lighting along the road and that there should be some security provided. The principal responds asking if they have permission to stay in the lab after regular hours, and why they cannot complete their work in the daytime.



Image credits: KRITI

In school

It has been well documented through several studies that a disproportionate number of girls drop out of school especially after middle school. Several reasons have been suggested for this: from the difficulties faced by girls during menstruation due to the lack of toilets in schools, to differential treatment by teachers, to family pressures such as financial burdens or the need to contribute to caregiving. But even the girls who do stay in school face a variety of discriminatory attitudes within the classroom, or in terms of opportunities made available to them (such as participation in sports, or other competitive activities). Single-sex schools of course fare better in some ways, but in co-ed schools there are often subtle differences that can be seen in the way boys and girls go through the system. At higher levels, female students may not always be able to put in the kind of hours and effort required, not because of a lack of ability, but because the system does not support it.

At the workplace

In the decades since independence, there has been an overall rise in literacy rates and education levels for both males and females. Fertility rates have been falling, which means that child-rearing responsibilities also have decreased over the years. Given this, we would expect that more and more women would be entering the workforce and contributing to—and benefitting from—

the economy. Indeed, the Indian economy has grown significantly in the past several decades, notwithstanding the slump during the COVID-19 pandemic yet, strangely, the participation of women has actually declined over the years.⁴ Experts cite several factors for this. Increasing mechanisation and automation have cut into the kinds of work that women used to traditionally perform in sectors like agriculture and textile production. The newer industries often call for higher levels of skill and familiarity with technology which women have little access to. The increasing competition for low-level jobs leads to more men taking up work that was mostly done by women. Additionally, women's work has largely been invisible; unpaid housework and carework does not count as work within a monetised economy.

In white collar jobs, women often choose to remain in lower and middle levels because this allows them to manage home, family and work. Women who work outside the home still bear the primary responsibility for household chores and childcare—what is called the “double burden”. When household incomes rise—for instance, when the male breadwinner earns enough to support the family—women give up their jobs. A woman having to work is seen in many communities as socially undesirable, reflecting the belief that her place is in the home. As a result, many women never have the opportunity to realise their full potential.

In addition to the social and cultural factors, many workplaces are not very friendly to women. Whether it is in terms of basic facilities like restrooms, or leave policies and avenues for professional growth, the odds are generally stacked in favour of men.

In all the contexts listed above, there are different expectations and accommodations for boys and girls. Boys also find their worlds limited in many ways, as they have to perform the roles that are set for them in the family (breadwinner), in society and the community (leadership and responsibility), in school (academic and sporting excellence) and at the workplace (take on certain kinds of tasks). In these ways, gender acts as a factor that prescribes what a girl or a boy can or cannot do.

What is the nature of barriers?

It's worth stopping for a moment to think about what actually creates these barriers. The effect of these barriers is to “normalise” the differences between males and females. That is, we take it as a natural part of life that men and women will be treated differently, and that this difference is natural and beyond question. It is “the way things are”. But if we look closely, we may be able to see that the barriers have evolved over time to become a structure of gender relations that we take for granted. The first step to addressing these barriers, and overcoming them, is to recognize where they exist, and what form they take.

⁴ “Trends in Women's Workforce Participation in India”, IWWAGE, URL: <https://iwwage.org/re-source-workparticipation/>. Accessed 09 February 2022.

Physical/infrastructural barriers

We often think of women as not being “able” to do things because of their biology—we are told that they are weaker, more prone to exploitation, and thus must be protected. Girls are told they cannot run faster than boys, but if a person (whether boy or girl) has to run in restrictive, flowing clothes, can they do it to the best of their ability?

Take a look at this visual. While this shows women in western clothing, it's not difficult to imagine that it would be just as hard to run in a saree and chappals as it is in high heels and tight skirts! The visual also shows that women have to run the race even as they take care of other responsibilities.

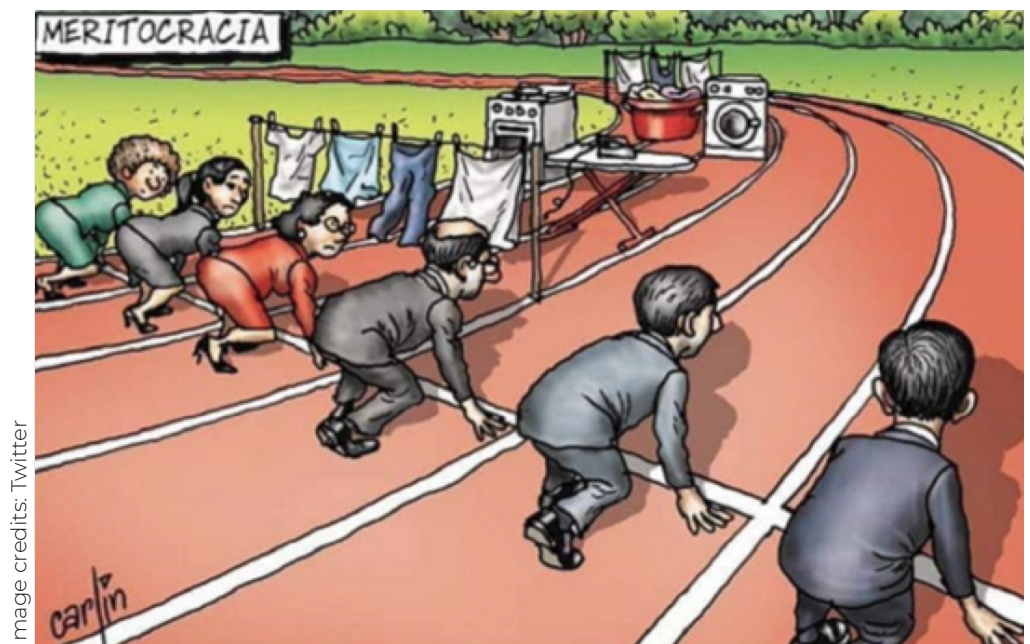


Image credits: Twitter

The barriers exist in the way the world is built: in terms of the physical structures of roads, buildings, equipment and machinery. Other than the kitchen, which one might say is sometimes designed with a woman's needs in mind, most other spaces, whether domestic, professional, or public, tend to be built for the average adult male. Female scientists often struggle to work with instruments that are designed for taller individuals, sometimes developing severe neck problems because they have to use microscopes (for example) that require them to bend their necks at an awkward angle. On buses and commuter trains, fewer than ten percent of the seats and standing spaces are reserved for women—as if there is an expectation that only a small number will be using them. Moreover, if you have tried to hold on to a strap on a bus or train, you would know that the height and angle is often uncomfortable for the average woman. We've already mentioned the lack of toilets for girls in schools, but this is also true of many work places. The late American supreme court judge Ruth Bader Ginsberg, often spoke about how, in



Image credits: KRITI

the huge building of the US Supreme Court, there was only one bathroom for the women; to reach that they had to go down several floors! It is only recently that airports, train stations, and a few other public facilities have started providing private spaces for nursing mothers.

Laws and regulations

A close study of the law will reveal the extent to which patriarchal norms guide the framing and implementation of laws, and also the regulations and rules that exist in many institutions. For instance, it was only recently that it became permissible to enter the mother's name as a legal guardian. Many forms and applications require that a woman enter her father, husband's or other male guardian's name. In some parts of the world, a woman's testimony in court holds less weight than that of a man's, and often a woman cannot drive, walk on the street, or attend public events without being accompanied by a man.

In India, it was only in recent years that domestic violence was regarded as a criminal act,

or that gender-based harassment at work was recognized as something that needed to be addressed. In fact, the Indian constitution guarantees that there should be no discrimination on the basis of (among other things) sex, and that women must be treated the same as men. However, in practice this tends to be ignored, as women are often denied a share of parental property – being viewed as “*paraya dhan*” (another's property), and it has been a long struggle led by women's rights activists to achieve these rights in law.⁵

Most workplaces also do not recognize the specific needs that women employees might have, and therefore construct their

⁵Gupta, Anoushka, “Women's struggle for just and equal rights over property in India.” *Action-Aid Association (India)*, July 2017, URL: <https://www.actionaidindia.org/blog/womens-struggle-for-just-and-equal-rights-over-property-in-india/>. Accessed 09 February 2022.

employment policies based on what they would expect from a male employee. The male viewpoint is considered the “normal” viewpoint, and anything that deviates from this is seen as a special favour that is being offered. These expectations then dictate the framing of performance standards that are skewed, more often than not, towards men. Staying late at work is seen as more important than getting work done on time; showing aggression is valued more than compassion or gentle firmness.

Social and cultural norms

The most important set of barriers, however, arises from the way we think about gender. We associate certain traits (courage, strength, perseverance, authority, knowledge) with men and others (beauty, compassion, weakness, vulnerability) with women. These associations then lead us to believe that men and women are better suited to certain types of occupations—we begin to see these as natural or ‘innate’ qualities that reside in men and women.

From these fundamental beliefs evolve conventions—women must behave like this, while men can be like this—that over time become rigid norms. When people do not abide by these norms, there is social disapproval, and in some extreme cases, such people are even shunned in their communities. In large parts of India, families are expected to get their daughters married once they achieve puberty. The fact that at present the legal age of marriage for girls is 18 (and will possibly be raised to 21) has not discouraged this practice. This is a sign that social and cultural norms are far more important and long-standing in our society than laws and regulations. Even if progressive and gender-positive laws are framed, things will not change as long as these norms remain unchanged.

Examining these different kinds of barriers tells us that it is not gender itself that is a barrier, but the way we think about gender, and the world we build based on those beliefs. As long as the imagination of our spaces, practices, and norms is based on men as the “default” user of these spaces and subject of these practices, there will be barriers for women. If instead, we design these spaces and formulate practices that take into account the average woman, we will find that suddenly, gender is no longer a barrier. The disability movement promotes an understanding of barriers as not being located in the body of an individual, but in the way the world is structured. For too long, the world has been structured for able-bodied men, which is why gender has been seen as a barrier.

How do we overcome barriers?

“Nothing about us without us” is a slogan that the disability movement has used, to emphasise that any change that pertains to a group of people must be led and shaped by those people. So the first approach to overcoming barriers is to ensure that girls and women have access—to education, work, financial control, decision making, policy making and governance. And while just bringing more girls and women into these different spaces will not alone

make a difference, it is a starting point. As more women come into workspaces, and as they acquire more power, they will start to refashion these environments in ways that help other women—and gradually, the barriers could disappear. Already, we are seeing more women-friendly policies in the corporate sector (more child-care leave, better maternity benefits), and in education (more scholarships, better facilities for female students), and even in public spaces (women-driven taxis and shuttles for women).

However, the big challenge is to change the ways of thinking. We are seeing that even though more women are being educated and coming into roles of responsibility, the incidence of gender based violence has not come down. In fact, many scholars are noting what they call a “backlash”—a resentment from men that is driving up violence, because they perceive women taking jobs and opportunities that they think are rightfully theirs. It is only when everyone begins to see males and females, and those of other genders, as innately equal, that we can create a gender-neutral, or gender-sensitive world.

The change in thinking needs to happen at the level of family, in schools (led by teachers) and in other such institutions of society where socialisation occurs.

Group Discussion 3

Overcoming Gender Barriers

Watch these advertisements:

What Will They Say About You (Nike Ad)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-UO9vMS7AI>

Share The Load (Ariel):

<https://youtu.be/wJukf4ifuKs>.

Feminism, Mom, and the Game of Chess (Kommune video)

<https://youtu.be/eaWw2OtO43Q>.

Discuss the barriers that these women are shown to be overcoming. How do they do so? Have you seen instances like this in your family and community? Were the women able to overcome these barriers in real life? If not, what got in their way? As a member of the family/community, what would your role be to help them overcome these barriers?

Summary

Gender affects all areas of our lives: our family, our society and community, and institutions like the school. These are all sites where we also learn how to behave in ways that are acceptable to society (also known as socialisation), and thus we are often socialised to internalise gender roles through our interactions with these institutions.

The barriers that affect us because of our gender can be of various kinds: physical/infra-structural, legal/regulatory, or socio-cultural.

In order to overcome these barriers, we must actively seek to include more women and non-binary people in the processes and spaces where important decisions are made regarding education, work, finance, culture and governance. Along with such measures, a change in ways of thinking also needs to take place at the level of the family, community, school and society.

Additional Resources

1. Muskan | Animation Short Film on Gender Equality and Female Foeticide, YouTube Channel: Directorate of Women and Child Development HP. Uploaded March 19, 2017. URL: <https://youtu.be/9HkIP4YkXu4>. Accessed 06 February 2022.
2. *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: Module for Master Trainers*. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, 2015. URL: <https://wcd.nic.in/bbbp-schemes/trainers-training-module-english>. Accessed 07 February 2022. Resource material on the following topics:
 - c. Sex Selection and PCPNDT (pp 66-69)
 - d. Marriage and Adoption Laws (pp. 72-80)
 - e. Laws around Gender-Based Violence, Domestic Violence and Child Sexual Abuse (pp. 83-90)
 - f. Importance of Educating Girl Children and Hygiene for Girl Children (pp. 94-100)
 - g. Health and Nutrition (pp. 55-63)
 - h. Child Rights (pp. 46-52)
3. Karwa, Surbhi. *The Burden of Being an 'Indian Woman': Karnataka High Court Bail Order and Rape Myths*. The Leaflet, 29 June 2020. URL: <https://www.theleaflet.in/the-burden-of-being-an-indian-woman-karnataka-high-court-bail-order-and-rape-myths/>. Accessed 07 February 2022.



Activities for Your Workshop

Activity 4: A Gendered World

Duration: **1 hour 30 minutes**

Methods: **Group discussion based on prior readingn**

FOR THE FACILITATOR(S):

1. The participants should be provided with reading material about the following topics beforehand (*references provided in the additional resource section for Chapter 2*):

- **Child Rights and RTE**
- **Health and Nutrition (with a focus on women and girl children)**
- **Importance of Educating the Girl Child and Ensuring Hygiene for Girls in Schools**
- **Laws and Information around Gender Based Violence (GBV), Domestic Violence (DV), and Child Sexual Abuse**
- **Marriage and Adoption Laws in India**
- **Sex Selection and PCPNDT**

Ask the participants if they wish to highlight for their cohort some important points from each of the readings given. You may further facilitate a discussion about how teachers can incorporate and use this knowledge within their teaching practices--for example, using knowledge of acts around domestic violence and child sexual abuse can help them aid the school authorities in assisting victims in the school and their communities approach the appropriate authorities.

2. Discuss other additional readings that have been provided: for example, the leaflet on myths around rape. Ask the group to discuss how these myths affect their lives and world views, and whether there has been some change in their way of thinking about gender based violence in the light of the conversations that have taken place in this workshop.

Activity 5: Gender as a Barrier

Duration: **45 minutes**

Methods: **Group discussion and viewing-based discussion**

FOR THE FACILITATOR(S):

1. As with the Food for Thought provided earlier in Chapter 2, start a group discussion with participants about their ambitions and goals. Some questions to pursue:

- *Looking at your life, what barriers have you faced?*
- *Did you dream of doing something when you were younger?*
- *Have you been able to do it? Why not? (This may or may not be related to gender; but it could be a good starting point for thinking about one's life and how gender intersects with other aspects of one's identities.)*
- *What are some of the barriers women face?*

You may use relevant sections from Towards a World of Equals (details provided in the Additional Resources section in Chapter 1) to further facilitate this discussion.

2. Play the animated short film *Muskan* (details provided in Additional Resources section of Chapter 2) as well as some advertisements that show the consequences of sexism (URLs provided in the Group Discussion 3). Now ask the group to discuss what they have just seen. How does gender become a barrier in these videos? Have they had similar experiences in their lives?



Image credits: KRITI

Chapter 3

BOYS AND GIRLS IN THE CLASSROOM





When young students, both male and female, attend school together, generally a healthy trend of co-education is set. Co-education refers to the teaching of both boys and girls in the same school and under the same roof. It also means imparting the same education to all the students without any distinction. Such an atmosphere creates a feeling of camaraderie between boys and girls and develops the personality of both genders to the maximum. The system of co-education seems to be far healthier as it removes the awkwardness between young boys and girls to enable them to interact and adapt with each other in a better and mature manner later on in their lives. In today's world when women are competing with men on an equal footing for job opportunities, salaries and status in society, accepting co-education as a changing order from the school level can definitely open up more positive avenues in social and human relations. While this system of education aims at bringing boys and girls together there are, at the same time, some issues of concern that require deft handling by the teachers and school authorities.

In schools, the classroom is the space where students learn without any interruptions or outside distractions. It largely depends on individual teachers how they choose to manage the daily concerns of teaching that directly and indirectly shape the world-view of the students. By and large, students respond to a teacher in relation to the teacher's communication style. Ideally, a teacher should be positive-minded, well-organised, outgoing, confident, and compassionate. Nowadays, students are participative in their classes and are seen to be actively involved in adding their views to the content taught and sharing their ideas. When teachers impart knowledge and information through their lessons, the students are expected to understand a given subject or content area. The modern classroom has also become an interesting place where active learning approaches such as project- and design-based learning engage the students in relevant and purposeful activities.

Given the premise that a classroom should be recognised as a space where all students should experience the process of teaching-learning in a happy and positive environment, it becomes important to discuss the issue of gender sensitisation in the classroom that aims to provide an equal learning space for boys and girls alike. The classroom would then become a space where the wellbeing and academic achievements of all students is realised. The ideal classroom should be a place where both boy and girl students can come to work towards specific goals set before them in the class. Nowadays, instruction is imparted through varied formats and it should be made available to students of both genders. Classroom behaviour and classroom communities are cohesive components of classroom management. When students are engaged well, learning becomes student-centric. Teachers are not only meant to impart knowledge, they also need to maintain discipline and time, and above all provide an equitable platform to all students.

UNICEF's toolkit for teachers and schools 2020, a manual on gender sensitive pedagogy says that *“teachers can contribute to the social construction of gender through the way they treat girls and boys equally or unequally, by using texts, curricula and management styles that reinforce or break down gender stereotypes”*.⁶

When we discuss the idea of co-education, there are some aspects that come to the fore with respect to the role that girls in particular play in a classroom setting. Studies have shown that primary-school classrooms with more girls show increased academic success overall. The presence of girls in a classroom is found to have a positive influence on the general classroom environment and it has been found that boys benefit a great deal from having girls in their classroom.

In the light of the above considerations, let us ask some basic questions about co-education, particularly in relation to the classroom.

Why should boys and girls go to school together?

The atmosphere in co-educational schools prepares students much better for adult life than in gender-segregated schools. When girls and boys work and socialise together, there is no awkwardness between them when they eventually interact with each other as young adults and beyond. When children interact with each other and understand that their emotions, thoughts, and ambitions are actually more similar than different—and that everyone deserves the same respect that they themselves expect from their peers—instances of harmful gendered behaviour in adolescence can begin to decrease in subsequent generations (e.g. eve-“teasing” or street sexual harassment, which is a common occurrence around high schools, colleges, and universities). Sustained interaction with the other gender also makes it easier for children to grow up to be well-adjusted adults who can maintain healthy, respectful friendships and personal/professional relationships with others in their lives.

How does gender affect the classroom?

Generally, it is found that boys are more active participants in classrooms as they talk more and also ask more questions. Boys also tend to dominate group discussions and ignore the ideas and requests that are put forward by girls. Boys are a noisier group when compared to girls and on the whole they like to make their presence felt in the classroom or playground.

⁶Clare Dowd, Aryeh Shell, Veronica Thamaini, Louisa Trackman, Gender Responsive Pedagogy: A toolkit for Teachers and Schools, 2nd Ed, Section 1, Unit 2, Nairobi: Forum for African Women Educationalists. FAWE House, p.13

Group Discussion 4

Curious Girls and Shy Boys

It is important to remember that just because boys tend to exhibit these behaviours, does not make them naturally better at classroom participation.

Pause here and think of your own classroom(s):

Have you had quiet, shy boys in your classroom?

Have you had active, enthusiastic girls in your class who asked many questions?

Most of us will answer “yes” to both these questions.

This highlights the point made in the previous chapter: our behaviours are most often the result of being taught to behave a certain way, and not because we are born that way.

Thinking back to the enthusiastic, curious girls and the quiet, shy boys you have taught, try to recall how you treated the girls: did you praise them for asking questions, did you answer their questions patiently? Was this behaviour similar to or different than how you would normally react to boys asking a lot of questions?

What about the shy boys? Did you encourage them to speak up in class, and were these efforts similar to the ones you would normally make to include shy, quiet girls in classroom discussions? Answer as honestly as possible.

If you could go back in time and change how you handled these situations, what would you do differently?

How are boys and girls treated differently at school?

Teachers are also a product of the same society, and so we are not outside its influence. Oftentimes, the gender biases we grow up learning and ingraining deep in our psyche end up affecting how we treat girls and boys in the classroom. Teachers may not be the primary cause of gender role differences in the classroom, but we may unintentionally influence students through our responses and choices in the classroom. Generally, when boys falter in the classroom, it is seen that teachers give them extra time to answer or the question is reframed or broken down into a series of simpler problems to help the boys to answer. Boys also get more praise and feedback from their teachers, while the girls' work is appreciated by the teachers more for its appearance rather than its content. That being said, gender bias does not always mean boys are treated fairly, either: boys are also disciplined more frequently and harshly by their teachers in comparison to girls.

Which gender does better in school?

Girls get better grades/marks than boys do at all ages, including in maths and science. An analysis of grades covering elementary, high school, and college and university students shows that girls outperform boys at all ages.⁷ On average, it is found that a higher percentage of girls in a classroom lowers the amount of classroom disruption and fosters a better relationship between pupils and their teachers. Teachers are less tired in classrooms with more girls, and pupils overall seem to be more satisfied when there is a high female-to-male ratio. Boys and girls may learn differently, but a new study has found that learning alongside girls actually improves boys' grades at school: since girls are found to read more, boys in the company of girls tend to develop a reading habit.⁸

Having boys and girls connect with each other as peers and classmates points to far-reaching positive effects of having coeducational classrooms and schools. Classes which have more than 55 percent girls fare better in examinations and have less violent outbursts overall. Primary-school classrooms with more girls show increased academic success. In the middle schools, girls were found to have better academic achievement in English, languages and maths. In high school, the classrooms which had the best academic achievements overall were consistently those that had a higher proportion of girls enrolled, and boys with more girls in their classes show higher enrollment rates in both advanced maths and science classes. Thus, teaching and raising girls and boys together can lead to better learning outcomes for all children in the long run.

⁷Maggie Fox, Girls get better grades than boys, even in STEM subjects, study finds, Sept. 25, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/girls-get-better-grades-boys-even-stem-subjects-study-finds-n912891>.

⁸ The study is based on an unpublished paper by Prof. Schlosser which was done while on a post-doctoral fellowship at Princeton University. Keep Boys And Girls Together In The Classroom To Optimise Learning, Research Suggests, Science Daily, April 14, Tel Aviv University, 2008.

Food for Thought: How would you respond?

Think about your own classroom. How many of these observations have been true in your experience?

- Have you seen girls perform better than boys in all subjects, including maths and science?
- Have you found that there is less disturbance in class and/or you are able to connect better with your students and/or you are less tired when there are more girls in class?
- Have you noticed that boys learn better when they work and study alongside girls (or vice versa)?

Why do you think this has been true/untrue in your classroom? Try to explain the cause without using 'natural' ability as an argument; what other factors may be causing these behaviours?

Responsibility of the Teachers and School Managements

In order to harness all these benefits of coeducation then, schools need to be gender responsive and should inculcate such an environment that takes into account the specific needs of both girls and boys. In order to do so, school management and the teaching staff need to understand the principles of educational practices that promote gender equality. It is imperative that school managements should regularly conduct teacher training workshops to keep their staff abreast with the latest teaching methodologies and learning materials, use of the correct language in the classroom, classroom set-up, and the physical environment that will facilitate gender parity and learner-centric pedagogy.

It becomes the duty of teachers to understand and protect the human rights of all students who come to class. Further, to ensure learning outcomes are maximised, teachers must provide all students with accurate information in a friendly manner about their lesson plans, time tables, extracurricular activities and examinations. Other than this regular workload, teachers should also be prepared to deal with unwarranted situations that may involve bullying of girls by boys or ill feeling among boys and girls stemming from gender bias. The teachers, along with the school management should take adequate care to provide support mechanisms to students and also develop emotional intelligence, empathy and conflict resolution skills in students, so that there is quick redressal of such grievances. Thus, teaching training should necessarily have a component of classroom-related gender issues and there also should be good communication and rapport between teachers and the school management on this front.

Classroom Set-up and Management

A typical classroom arrangement is where desks are lined up in neat rows and the teacher is facing the students. Although this arrangement is most popular and looks fine, there is a drawback in that it can reinforce many traditional socialisation processes. The teacher is seen as the expert bestowing knowledge to the students, rather than actively engaging students with more learner-centred pedagogies. Those who are less comfortable speaking out sit at the back of the class and are less likely to participate unless the teacher makes a special effort to involve them.

What can you do as a teacher to try and improve this situation? A different arrangement such as breaking the class into smaller groups or sitting in a circle may encourage all students to participate actively. Where this is not possible, seats can be rotated to ensure all students are engaged in turn. In addition, teachers could make girls and boys share desk space in the classroom. This can help break down barriers between the genders, inculcate understanding and respect for one another, and make the students work together toward a common goal.

Another step that can be taken towards improving your teaching is to practice gender responsive pedagogy, which means teaching and learning processes that pay attention to the specific learning needs of girls and boys. This often requires teachers to actively think of girls and boys and their differing needs in the processes of lesson planning, teaching practices, classroom management and performance evaluation. Gender responsive teachers take gender into account for planning the lessons, and also consider differences in the learning needs of students based on their different social backgrounds and learning styles. A gender responsive lesson plan takes into consideration the teaching and learning materials, methodologies, activities, and classroom arrangement.

Praise and Criticism

At the individual level as teachers, we can work on our teaching practices to minimise gender bias in our interactions with our students. Most teachers want to be fair to all students, but they may sometimes praise or criticise boys and girls differently without even realising. The tendency is to praise boys more than girls for displaying knowledge correctly, but to criticise girls more than boys for displaying knowledge incorrectly. This means that often, teachers tend to overlook wrong answers with boys but with girls they tend to overlook right answers. The result is that boys' knowledge seems more important and boys themselves more competent. It also makes the girls' knowledge less visible and girls themselves less competent.⁹

On the other hand, teachers also tend to praise girls for good behaviour, regardless of its relevance to the lesson, and tend to criticise boys for bad or inappropriate behaviour. The net result is to make girls' seem more good than they may really be, and also to make their goodness seem more important than their academic competence. Similarly, the teacher's patterns of response imply that boys are worse than they may really be.

What Can Teachers Do To Minimise Gender Bias in their Classrooms?

UNICEF's manual states that the language teachers use in the classroom can reinforce negative gender stereotypes or promote gender inclusion and equality. Some examples of how teachers may unknowingly be perpetuating gender bias are given below; you can find a more detailed list in the UNICEF manual:¹⁰

⁹ "Gender differences in the classroom." OER Services, Educational Psychology, URL: <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-educationalpsychology/chapter/gender-differences-in-the-classroom/>. Accessed 12 February 2022.

¹⁰ Source: Clare Dowd, Aryeh Shell, Veronica Thamaini, Louisa Trackman, Gender Responsive Pedagogy: A toolkit for Teachers and Schools, 2nd Ed, Section 1, Unit 2, Nairobi: Forum for African Women Education-
alists. FAWE House, p.13

Don'ts

- Many teachers welcome their students in the classroom by saying – “Good morning, boys and girls”; other examples of verbal gender-splitting are: Some teachers send “all the girls, then all the boys” to the assembly hall. New research suggests that such language draws children’s attention to gender.
- In some kindergarten classes, children are made to count the number of students according to gender, and often prepare seating plans that segregate boys and girls into different rows. This can reinforce the divide between genders.
- Some teachers set up good-natured competitions innocently, such as boys versus girls without realising what they are doing. Other ways in which boys and girls are pitched in stark contrast to one another is by teachers not assigning physically stressful activities to girls while the boys are made to do physically exhausting tasks. For example, it is common for teachers to ask for “a couple of strong boys to help lift a heavy bench,” or asking girls to decorate the classroom.
- Teachers should avoid making statements such as, “The girls are doing a good job,” or, “The boys need to be a bit quieter.” This will help children concentrate on their identity as students rather than as members of a gender group.

Dos

- Psychologists recommend that teachers should organise classrooms by using educationally relevant groups, or groups whose membership changes frequently. For example, children who are learning about the months of the year could be asked to line up according to their birthdays. Or children could be asked to sit in groups according to whether their shoes have buckles, laces or velcro.
- Teachers should encourage girls to be physically adventurous; play rough-and-tough games or let them climb to the top of the stairs or the slide. Instead of saying “Be careful!” to the girls they should say, “Come on, now you go!”
- Teachers can engage emotionally and verbally with boys and make eye contact, cuddle, sing, talk about feelings, or read books. They can find toys and books that appeal to boys which have emotional content.

Gender Audit: The Role of Our Textbooks

Following the 16th December 2012 gang rape of a young paramedical student in Delhi, the Prime Minister’s Office had asked the Human Resource Development Ministry (which is now known as Ministry of Education) to emphasise on moral science in schools and to include chapters on value education in textbooks so that gender sensitivity and respect for women are inculcated in students

Research has shown that co-education has positive learning outcomes in the long term.

at a young age. The Justice Verma Committee also recommended that gender equality be integrated in the curriculum at all levels in school education and gender modules should be developed for percolation of issues of equality and equity.

When a gender audit of the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) textbooks was done, it was found that although the textbooks were largely gender inclusive, there were some concerns that showed inculcating gender stereotypes in some subjects. Such aspects mainly showed “men in a variety of professions and women as homemakers, teachers, nurses and doctors”.

English textbooks have subtle gender stereotypes like a boy holding a book while a girl is engaged in conversation. This means to project the girl in a non-serious role while the boy is shown to be studious. Women are shown as teachers, cooks, and nurses reflecting an extension of household work. Men are depicted in multiple professions, as pilots, artists, astronauts, magicians, rulers, postmen, vegetable sellers, newspaper sellers, cobblers, librarians, drivers, dramatists, musicians, athletes, scholars, wrestlers, grocers, policemen, sportspersons and woodcutters. In fact, the overall depiction of women is mainly confined to ‘caring roles’ or relational categories that of daughter, sister, wife, mother and so on. Women are depicted in a limited manner.

That being said, there has certainly been some progress in designing the textbooks we use/ A special effort is made in the Mathematics textbooks to not only make the subject more enjoyable but also “to remove fear of mathematics among students, particularly girls”. Mathematics textbooks show women inheriting ancestral wealth in equal proportion and also receiving a share in the property. However, there is still a long way to go in order to make all textbooks and teaching tools gender-responsive. To help bridge this gap, as teachers we should engage the class in critical analysis of the images or text that is available at hand by discussing it through a gender lens rather than merely running through it as it is. For example, if there are images of doctors as always men and nurses as always women, the teacher should clarify this in the classroom conversation or find visual examples that show women as doctors. While there are certainly male doctors and female nurses, if this is all that students see, a boy might not realise that he can also be a nurse or a girl might not realise that she can also be a doctor.

Thus, the concerns regarding pedagogy and learning achievement of both girls and boys in their performance in individual subjects throughout schooling requires that teachers discuss and use those learning methods that challenge gender construction in the classroom. By doing so, teachers will be able to address the gender-gap for establishing equity of all genders. This can help facilitate a fair environment and a level playing field for all students.

Food for Thought: How Are Our Textbooks Written?

Read the following text from the Global Education Monitoring Report's World Education Blog:

How does weather affect us?

The weather of a place can affect our daily lifestyles in many ways. This makes the weather forecast significant to us. Weather influences to a very great extent the sort of food we eat, what we wear, how we live and work. Despite the advances made in science and technology, farmers and their crops are still at the mercy of the climate.

Farmers must know the weather conditions so that their crops can be planted at the right time. Fishermen must not go into the sea to catch fish. Sportsmen cannot be engaged in sporting activities during certain weather conditions. The housewife, too, must know the weather for the day to be able to decide her daily activities, for example, laundry work.

What is wrong in the above text? Why so? How would you rewrite this paragraph to convey the same content in a more gender-neutral manner?

Now examine the textbooks you use to teach your subject(s) at school. Are there any visual or textual descriptions and/or examples that portray girls/women and boys/men in biased ways? How so? Do you ever use certain examples or teaching methods that rely on gender-based logic? Think of how you can change these to communicate with your students in a more gender-friendly manner.

How can you bring in additional examples to discuss with your students to ensure your teaching becomes more gender-responsive?



Image credits: KRITI

Summary

Despite our best intentions, teachers too are the product of the society in which they live, and hence we often unknowingly perpetuate certain behaviours in our classrooms that can put girls and boys at a disadvantage, albeit in different ways.

Research has shown that coeducation has positive learning outcomes in the long term; when girls and boys learn together and are facilitated and encouraged equally, they all do much better in terms of academic performance.

Small ways in which we address our students, conduct our classes, and/or praise or criticise students can often further reinforce negative gender stereotypes, and thus it is important that we actively choose to incorporate gender-responsive teaching practices in our everyday interactions with students across all ages.

Gender audits have also pointed at the need for gender-responsive textbooks; even though we have come a long way in terms of using gender-inclusive examples, teachers can still audit their own textbooks and find ways to explain concepts and ideas using gender-responsive examples that do not further reinforce gender stereotypes.

Additional Resources

1. *Child-Friendly Schools Manual*, UNICEF, URL: <https://www.unicef.org/documents/child-friendly-schools-manual>. Accessed 07 February 2022.
2. "How Gender-Responsive Are My Teaching and Learning Materials?" *Creating Supportive Learning Environments for Girls and Boys: A Guide for Educators*, IREX, pp. 27-31. URL: <https://www.irex.org/resource/creating-supportive-learning-environments-girls-and-boys-guide-educators>. Accessed 07 February 2022.
3. "How Gender Friendly is My Classroom?", *Creating Supportive Learning Environments for Girls and Boys: A Guide for Educators*, IREX, pp. 11-26. URL: <https://www.irex.org/resource/creating-supportive-learning-environments-girls-and-boys-guide-educators>. Accessed 07 February 2022.
4. *Creating Supportive Learning Environments for Girls and Boys: A Guide for Educators*, IREX, pp. 11-26. URL: <https://www.irex.org/resource/creating-supportive-learning-environments-girls-and-boys-guide-educators>. Accessed 07 February 2022.
5. Kuroyanagi, Tetsuko (transl. Dorothy Britton). *Totto Chan: The Little Girl at the Window*, 1981.
6. Ramanujan, A.K. "A Flowering Tree": A Woman's Tale". *Oral Tradition*, 12/1, 1997. pp. 226-243
7. Kumar, Krishna. "Growing Up Male" *What is Worth Teaching?* Orient Longman, 1992, pp. 1- 22.

8. Ramachandran, Vimala. *Gender and Social Equity in Primary Education*, SAGE, 2004.
9. Ramachandran, Vimala. *Inside Indian Schools: The Enigma of Equity and Quality*, Orient Blackswan, 2020. Ramachandran, Vimala & Kameshwari Jandhyala. *Gender and Education*, Orient Blackswan, 2019.
10. Ramachandran, Vimala & Kameshwari Jandhyala. *Gender and Education*, Orient Blackswan, 2019.
11. Ramachandran, Vimala & Kameshwari Jandhyala. *Cartographies of Empowerment: The Mahila Samakhya Story*, Zubaan Publications, 2015.
12. Manjrekar, Nandini. *Gender and Education in India*, Routledge, 2021.





Activities for Your Workshop

Activity 6: What Shapes Our Teaching?

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Duration: **45 minutes**

Methods: **Group discussion**

FOR THE FACILITATOR(S):

This session is meant to be a free-form discussion where participants should be encouraged to take into account everything they have read, watched, heard, discussed, learned and unlearned in the workshop until now. Facilitate the discussion around points such as:

- *How have gender norms and gender biases shaped the participants' behaviour and choices in life until now?*
- *How have gender norms and gender biases shaped their teaching practices?*
- *Moving forward, do they think they can do certain things differently as educators to ensure their teaching practices are more gender responsive?*

If required, take help of short videos and other additional resources suggested to discuss at some length the socialisation of boys. Begin with questions such as:

- *Are there any "feminine" boys in the class? How do peers treat them? How do teachers deal with them?*
- *Would a different kind of teaching approach help boys as well as girls?*



Activity 7: How Gender-Responsive are Our Textbooks?

Duration: **2 hours**

Methods: **Group activity, group discussion**

FOR THE FACILITATOR(S):

1. Select a section from a textbook the participants use regularly in school. Conduct the activity- How Gender-Responsive Are My Teaching and Learning Materials? from the IREX toolkit (details provided in the Additional Resources section of Chapter 3).
2. Facilitate a discussion focused around the concept of “hidden curriculum” and how certain behaviours on the part of the teachers hinder gender-sensitive teaching. Ask the participants to draw from their learnings and thoughts from the activity they have just done.

Encourage the participants to use the tool on other textbooks they use as well in order to better understand what is meant by hidden curriculum.

3. Introduce the participants to other activities from the IREX toolkit (details provided in the Additional Resources section of Chapter 3), such as designing a gender-friendly lesson plan. These can be conducted by the teachers in their classroom to help students to identify certain hidden biases in their textbooks and teaching practices.
4. Encourage the participants to test these tools themselves before introducing them in class, and think about the results they come upon. What does this make apparent in their own teaching style and inherent biases? How does this make them feel?



Chapter 4

IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT GIRLS



Introduction

In an earlier chapter we learnt a lot about the gender barriers that women face - gender barriers that come from physical infrastructure, laws and regulations, and social and cultural norms. We learnt that these barriers tend to normalise the differences between males and females and we take it as a natural part of life that men and women will be treated differently. In fact, another factor that we tend to think of as normal is that these differences are always in favour of men.

Food for Thought: How Men are Affected by Gender Stereotypes

Can you think of some situations where gender stereotypes may actually make life more difficult for men? For each instance you think of, try and identify the underlying gender stereotype that puts men at a disadvantage. Why do you think this happens? Are there exceptions to this stereotype, if yes what are they?

As a teacher, what are some of the practical ways in which you can minimise instances of gender stereotypes that place boys at a disadvantage in school? Do these ways have any negative effect on girls? How would you make these solutions truly inclusive for all your students?

Group Discussion 5

Let's Flip the Script

What if there was a man who liked cooking and being hospitable? Would we be comfortable being guests in a house where the man brings tea while the wife sits and chats with her guests? Would he be forced to hand over tea making to his wife in order to conform to societal norms? Why do you think so?

What if there was a man that actually was not a very good driver and did not have a good sense of direction? Suppose every time he got into a car with his wife, he would be obliged to take the wheel, because people outside would find it odd to see a woman in the driving seat with the man in the passenger seat. How do you think this would make him feel? Why so?

The purpose of the above activity was to help you reflect on the fact that gender stereotypes also force men into certain roles or behaviours that they may not all be comfortable with. Let us consider some gender stereotypes that men face.

Group Discussion 6

Different Men, Different Behaviours

In each of the following situations, do you think that these expected behaviours are 'natural' to men? Why/why not?

1. A fifteen year old boy's dog has died. The dog had been his best friend for 12 years. He is very sad and deeply affected. The boy cries a lot.
2. Sona and Mohan have known each other for the last 2 years. Sona talks a lot and is the centre of attention in her office. Mohan is a quiet but confident person. They like each other but Sona is expecting Mohan to be the one to ask her out. Mohan is very stressed and unable to initiate their courtship.
3. Kevin could not finish his education as his father passed away when he was young. He began working in many types of jobs. His wife Kokila is doing very well in her job and earns twice as much as her husband. Kevin is unable to earn enough and this has caused a rift in the family and Kevin's status as the main earning member.
4. Amitabh has a thin, lean physique. He was never ill but could never gain weight or muscle despite exercise. People always commented on how he looked like a boy even when he was in his 30's.

As teachers and educators, we can take some steps to ensure boys grow up to be men who respect women as their equals in all fields of life.

If we reflect upon these and other instances from our own lives and experiences, we can see that men also face a number of barriers or expectations set upon them due to the gender constructs that are common in our society.

Just like gender, masculinity is a socially constructed concept that people selectively use to describe what a man should be and how he should act. The idea that men need to act tough and avoid showing all emotion--except anger and aggression, which is seen as desirable in a 'real man'--can be harmful to their mental health and can have serious consequences for society. This is why such a standard for masculinity has come to

be known as “toxic masculinity”. As they grow up, boys are taught to disregard anything that is stereotypically ‘feminine’, to suppress all their emotions, to distance themselves emotionally from others and to be aggressive.

From childhood onwards, boys and girls are trained to be the kind of people their society wants them to be: what we have discussed earlier as ‘socialisation’. This “training” starts in the family and continues in school through teachers, textbooks, games and other activities. Boys especially learn a lot about being a man from their friends and peer groups. Songs, films and stories add to this perception.

The interactions and social structures that boys see in their families and communities as they grow up lead them to internalise the patriarchal ways of thinking. Their mothers and sisters are serving food to the family and taking care of domestic chores, while their fathers are often the main decision-makers in the family. The daughters are expected to help with housework while the sons are sent out on errands. Boys’ education is given more importance because they are expected to earn well as grown men to support their family. If boys show interest in household chores or do not like fighting or being aggressive, they are told not to be ‘a sissy’ or to ‘be more like a man’.

Another factor that influences the men’s attitudes towards women is the kind of interaction that is permitted among the genders in childhood. Lack of interaction between boys and girls leads to objectification of women by men later on in life.



What is it like growing up male?

Dr. Krishna Kumar, an eminent educationist and academician, reflects on his experiences as a boy and considers the influences that shaped the attitudes towards women for him and his peers. He says that girls remain segregated in schools behind high walls, while boys get around with ease in public places. Boys play in the open, occupy the streets. Without ordinary, everyday contact with girls, boys stop thinking of them as individuals. Girls become a “great mystery” that a boy tries to painfully solve—without help from adults. Hence, as men they end up fearing women and feeling that the only way to relate to women is to dominate and control them.

Given below is an excerpt from his article titled Growing Up Male¹¹:

“Every evening we watched those hundreds of school girls in their blue skirts walking home in silent clusters of six or seven, crowding the narrow streets of the small town in a compact, neat style. As they walked, they looked impossibly purposeful. We boys used the street for so many different things — as a place to stand around watching, to run around and play, to try out the manoeuvrability of our bicycles. Not so for girls. As we noticed all the time, for girls the street was simply a means to get straight home from school. And even for this limited use of the street they always went in clusters, perhaps because behind their purposeful demeanour they carried the worst fears of being assaulted. Watching those silent clusters for years eroded my basic sense of endowing individuality to every human being. I got used to believing that girls are not individuals..”

Dr. Kumar also talks about the influences of movies and the abusive language that is commonly used by young boys, and how both of these further contributed to the idea that women were only sex objects.

¹¹ The article appears as a book chapter in: Luthra, S. (2021). Gender and Education in India A Reader (N. Manjrekar, Ed.) (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003191612>.

Food for Thought: Growing up Male

Think back to your own childhood: As a girl or a boy, what do you remember of the boys in your community/neighbourhood/school? Did their childhood seem different from the girls of the same age? How so? What were the differences in behaviours, and what boys and girls were expected/allowed to do? Did these behaviours change as you grew up? How so?

When you see boys and girls in your schools today, do they have the same patterns of behaviour, or do you find that some things are now changing? How so? Discuss how these expectations from boys (from adults as well as their own peers) may affect their behaviour as adult men. Can you think of interventions that can be made in the classroom and at the school to influence these behaviours?

A Culture of Toxic Masculinity

An aspect of masculinity that often creates a lot of stress in men's lives is the pressure on "performance". This is related to career success, sexual prowess or capability and the requirement that they have to lead and control - even if it is achieved violently. Men are expected to be leaders, to be able to earn well, to fight and be aggressive. In the family, it is assumed that men will be providers and women will be nurturers; thus men are always judged on their ability to provide for the family.

Most movies and popular media too show a similar concept of strong men and weak women, thus reinforcing the stereotypes that are prevalent in society: women need protection, and it is men who must protect them. Movies often link being violent and possessive with men's virality and sexuality: the hero is desirable because he protects 'his' woman by being violent—sometimes even towards the woman herself—and thus the signal given to the audience is that as a man if you want to be a hero, you must be violent. Men are cut off from a range of experiences where they can be the ones who nurture, or are the ones that need care and protection.

Food for Thought: Portrayal of Men in Movies

Can you think of any movies you have watched where a male character is shown not to be violent or aggressive? (This does not have to be the hero; it could be the villain, the sidekick, or the hero's friend) Is this man still attractive and desirable to the women in the film, despite his different behaviour? Is he admired by other men in the film? Why/why not? Is he rewarded or punished in the end for not being a 'typical' man? Some potential choices from Hindi films could be characters played by Farhan Akhtar in *Dil Dhadakne Do*, Hrithik Roshan in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham*, Aamir Khan in *Taare Zameen Par*, the three main characters from *3 Idiots*, or the male characters in Asim Abbasi's *Cake The Film* (2018). Among Telugu movies, there are similar characters played by Nani in *Ashta Chamma*, Raja in *Anand*, and Sumanth in *Godavari* and *Golconda High School*. Can you think of similar examples from other movies you have watched?

Now think about young men and boys watching these movies: what would be the message they would take away from these stories? Do you think such films will help them unlearn toxic masculinity? Can you think of any age-appropriate movies that boys and young men can watch, where the male characters show characteristics other than anger and aggression?

Organise a viewing of such a movie for boys in your class, and discuss with them what they think about these male characters. Are they inspired? Do they know of such men around them? Would they want to grow up to be like these men? Why/why not?

As teachers and educators, we can take some steps to ensure boys grow up to be men who respect women as their equals in all fields of life:

- Be aware of the patriarchal upbringing we may all have had that has influenced our behaviour.
- Make a conscious decision to not perpetuate these behaviour patterns to our children and our students.

- Be role models and reinforce gender neutral behaviour.
- Understand that teaching our boys about gender is as important as teaching the same to our girls.
- While girls have to be taught to be resilient and self-confident, boys need to understand the importance of “NO”.
- Understand that gender-based violence cannot be condoned and girls are not to be blamed for violence that they are subjected to.
- Boys should be taught that there is no “gender” based work and all work (especially work considered traditionally female work) is open for all to do.
- Have gender neutral classrooms that enable boys and girls to interact till they mature. This ensures that boys know how to communicate with girls and are able to work with girls with respect and as equals.

To reinforce the above points, read the case studies provided in the activity for this chapter in the next section, and work your way through the questions at the end of each case study.

Summary

It is important to remember that even though a majority of gender stereotypes put women, girls, and non-binary people at a disadvantage, gender stereotypes affect men and boys negatively too.

As boys grow up, they are constantly subjected to ideas about how they should behave and act that perpetuate toxic masculinity. This leads to them emulating behaviour that is violent and harmful, especially towards women and non-binary people.

As teachers, it is our duty to ensure that we teach boys the importance of consent, encourage them to be vulnerable and help them unlearn these stereotypes that they are subjected to, especially as they learn to navigate the world as young adolescents. Healthy male and female role models, combined with coeducation, can help inculcate mutual respect for one another, and help boys and girls treat each other as equals.

Additional Resources

1. Gender Considerations Checklist: Gender Equitable Schools, *PCLive* website. URL: <https://pclive.peacecorps.gov/pclive/index.php/library/general-subjects/diversity/item/1146-gender-considerations-checklist-gender-equitable-schools>. Accessed 07 February 2022.
2. Gender Considerations Checklist: Engaging Men and Boys Around Positive Masculinities, *PCLive* website. URL: <https://pclive.peacecorps.gov/pclive/index.php/library/general-subjects/diversity/item/1145-gender-considerations-checklist-engaging-men-and-boys-around-positive-masculinities>. Accessed 07 February 2022.



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Activities for Your Workshop

Activity 8: Case Studies

Duration: **1 hour 30 minutes**

Methods: **Group discussion**

The following are realistic case studies that we may have seen around us. Have a group discussion on each scenario and use the opportunity to reinforce the above points.

Issue 1: Disha Issue

Context: In 2019 in Telangana, a woman, Disha, a working professional was raped and murdered while being out in the evening near the outer ring road of Hyderabad. The police caught the four perpetrators.

Questions:

1. What can we teach our boys about the event?

Pointers for discussion: We want to bring your attention to this and other cases of violence against women or girl children that we have heard many times in the media.

Often the women are blamed or questioned unfairly - why was she in a public place, what was she wearing, who was she with etc. Do women not have a right to be safe in public? Should we be questioning the perpetrators of crime or the victims? What is the role of society in ensuring women are safe when they go out on work or for social reasons.

Issue 2: Pattern of Bullying, Abuse, Harassment and Violence

Context: Movies show some patterns of behaviour among men as an acceptable, prevalent and fun way in the name of romance or humour. There is a thin line between courtship and sexual harassment.

Material: Video Clips (provided)

Baahubali

(watch the scene from 00:58:50 onwards)

<https://youtu.be/KcxaB3FwGqY?t=3530>

Discuss: Describe what is happening in the scene; is the heroine happy with the hero's behaviour? What is her reaction? Is he respecting her body language? What does he continue to do?

Pointers for discussion: One can clearly see that the hero is in essence disrobing the heroine, and this is happening while she is trying to fight him. She is clearly unhappy, but he continues with his behaviour in a patronising manner, as if it is all very amusing to him.



Discuss: How does this scene end? What message is it giving to the viewers? What do you think this situation would be like if it were happening in real life?

Pointers for discussion: We see that even though the heroine is fighting the hero, by the end of the scene she is suddenly 'tamed' as soon as she sees her new, dressed up, feminine reflection in the waterfall. The film seems to signal to the viewer that she only truly becomes worthy of the hero's love when she transforms into a more appealing, feminine version of herself: and the hero has helped her do so. Even if he had to trick her into this transformation while she was fighting him, ultimately she sees the folly of her own ways and falls in love with him. Now think of this in a real context, without the background music and cinematic touches given to the scene: would such non-consensual behaviour not be classified as harassment? Would anyone who has been subjected to such behaviour fall in love with their harasser? How do you think such scenes promote a skewed sense of what 'romantic' behaviour should be like, especially among young men and women?

Hello Guru Prema Kosam song from Nirnayam

<https://youtu.be/0mJTZR7AfE>

Discuss: How is the hero trying to court the heroine in this song? Describe what is happening in the scene; is the heroine happy with the hero's behaviour? What is her reaction? Is he respecting her body language? What does he continue to do?

Pointers for discussion: Think back to the discussion about public spaces and gender in Chapter 2. How are the bystanders in these public spaces (roads, gardens, church, workplace) reacting to the hero's behaviour? We see that the heroine is clearly not happy with his advances, but he still goes on to follow her around the city, forcing himself on her often and even getting the support of bystanders who dance with him towards the end as he chases her down. In one scene, the hero seems to dress up as Krishna, a god known for his mischief and flirtation. Do you think this is a way of justifying his behaviour? Do you think someone who is harassing a woman in this way is simply being 'mischievous'? Think about whether such depictions actually promote the 'boys will be boys' attitude instead of promoting healthy, consensual, and respectful ways of showing courtship and romance on screen.

Discuss: Think of how such scenes play out in real life: have you ever seen women harassed by men on the streets or in public spaces?

Pointers for discussion: Do bystanders usually intervene, or are women left to fend for themselves most of the time? Who usually intervenes, if at all? What do you usually do when you happen to be a bystander in such situations? What are the reasons for your actions? Do you think there are ways citizens can make public spaces safer for women?

Disturb Chestha Ninnu* song from *Nenu Local

<https://youtu.be/yryL3imbt7w>

Discuss: Describe what is happening in the scene; is the heroine happy with the hero's behaviour? What is her reaction? Is he respecting her body language? What does he continue to do?

Pointers for discussion: One can clearly see that the hero is following and harassing the heroine. She is clearly annoyed and keeps trying to move away from him, but he continues with his behaviour, claiming he will continue to disturb her until she gives in.

Discuss: Where is this scene taking place? How are the other people in the scene reacting to this? Are there any figures of authority intervening in this situation? In real life, how should this situation be handled?

Pointers for discussion: We can see that this scene is taking place in a college. This is an important detail, as such situations are all too common in real life. Young men often follow, harass and chase their female peers—at times even stalking them, blackmailing them, or harming them when they reject their advances (in cases of acid attacks and sexual assault). As educators, what would be your duty to ensure that your school/college premises are safe for female students, especially as they grow older? How about the area near your school and the students' routes to and from their homes? Have you heard of cases where young women have had their mobility restricted/monitored due to such harassment on their way to college, like the heroine in this song faces on her bike and in the bus? How do you think teachers and school/college management can help in such cases to ensure girls and young women do not end up having to stop attending school/college for fear of such harassment?

Finally, discuss: What can we teach our children about real life versus reel life (movie depictions)? Should the real and the reel reflect one another? How can we, as teachers and educators, help counteract some of the harmful depictions of romance and courtship perpetuated by popular media?

Issue 3: Wrong Role Models in Schools

Context:

Story 1: Seetha Teacher always teaches only Rohit in the class. It doesn't matter where Rohit sits in the class, her eyes always focus on him and not the other students in class. The other children try to get Seetha Teacher's attention during class by asking doubts but if Rohit understands the topic, she will move to the next topic. Ayesha is also a smart girl and tries to compete with Rohit for the teacher's attention. If Rohit finishes writing what is on the blackboard, Seetha Teacher will erase it and go to the next topic. Other students call Rohit the "teacher's pet". Now, Ayesha does not have the same confidence that Rohit has in class.

1. How do we help Seetha Teacher understand the impact of her actions?
2. What is the classroom atmosphere like?

Story 2: Rana Sir is the PE teacher. He believes in maintaining discipline in the students and in the school overall. He is strict and loves sports. In class, he likes active children and makes sure that all children are neat and tidy in school.

One day, Jina came to school looking very unkempt. She also forgot to wear her tie and belt to school. Rana Sir saw her and made her stand up on the bench for the day. Other children sitting near her kept teasing her for standing on the bench. He laughed along with the other girls. Suddenly Jessy Teacher came into the room. Rana Sir came to the children and slapped the girls who were teasing Jina. When a female teacher questioned him about his disciplining style, Rana Sir became angry, and defensive and said "All of you girls have no brains!" and walked out of the room.

1. Rana Sir thinks he did the right thing and stopped bullying. What do you think? What is his relationship with other female teachers?
2. What impact will this incident have on Jina?





Chapter 5

MAKING OUR OWN PLANS



Now that we have discussed what gender is, how gender roles are internalised by us as members of society, how gender poses barriers to realising our potential—for women as well as men—we know that overcoming these barriers involves unlearning our own biases as well as actively teaching girls and boys that their gender does not have to dictate their choices, ambitions, and dreams. The first step towards beginning this conversation is to put into place proper mechanisms at the school level to ensure that our schools are places where there is a gender discourse taking place. Here are some pointers that can get you started.

Gender Discourse in Schools

Discussion on gender should be held frequently and openly. This will increase awareness and ensure that there is no discrimination and allow for gender parity. Here are a few suggestions to help you begin your efforts at various levels, depending on your school.

Primary School Level

- It is known that children in primary schools do not perceive differences between boys and girls normally. However, patriarchal mindsets at home play a role in their growth and mindset.
- They may have preferences for certain toys, for example, dolls for girls and cars for boys. If a child chooses against the norm they need to be supported for their individual choices.
- All children must be taught that all choices made by anyone are valid, in all spheres of life.
- Boys should be encouraged to show all their emotions, whether crying or anger. Similarly, girls should be encouraged to express when they are not happy with a situation instead of asking them not to be 'difficult'.
- Boys should be encouraged to express themselves artistically either through art, drama or music. Girls should be encouraged to take part in vigorous sports such as running, football, etc.
- Sessions on good touch and bad touch and what to do if they are faced with it must be conducted regularly.

Middle and High School Level

As they grow, boys and girls tend to begin separate interactions and not collaborate with each other as much as before. They should be encouraged to do so during these adolescent years. Peer pressure also picks up at this age and frequent discussions about gender would enable them to understand themselves and their peers better.

Gender Committees

Schools should form gender committees that talk about issues relating to gender. These committees should have equal participation from boys and girls, male and female teachers and some parents. Discussion can include issues such as but not limited to:

- Masculinity and Toxic masculinity

- Bullying
- Safety of boys and girls
- How boys can interact better with girls
- Street sexual harassment (colloquially known as 'eve teasing')
- Impact of movies and roles depicted in movies on gender perceptions
- Impact of social media on boys and girls including body image and self confidence
- Child sexual abuse and good touch/bad touch and what needs to be done if they face it (check appendix for more information on Child Sexual Abuse- CSA)
- Child marriages and the appropriate legal recourse for the same
- Sexual orientation and same sex relationships
- Positive role models

Gender committees can also form the framework to celebrate anyone breaking gender norms. These will work to reinforce the idea that such behaviour is normal and commendable. For example,

- Recognizing a boy who does art work, or a girl who excels in STEM, or sports
- Encouraging girls to take up leadership roles in the school
- Any boys or girls showing compassion towards fellow students or others

These committees must also hold frequent interactions with parents as well so that gender-neutral behaviour in school extends to home as well. During these interactions, teachers can hold gender sensitization workshops for parents along with student volunteers. Such gender committees will allow the students' voices to be heard and work to enable a better teacher student dynamic.

Checklist for a Gender-Equitable School

There are several checklists that you can find online as a part of gender sensitisation manuals and teacher training kits that can help you set up gender-friendly classrooms and schools. Two such useful lists are available on the Peace Corps website as a part of their *Let Girls Learn* initiative resource bank.¹² You can access the checklist for Gender Equitable Schools online¹³ to find a detailed version of the following suggestions:

- Gender-related data in the school should be collected and discussed with parents and the school management (e.g. attendance, completion rates, etc.).
- Gender-equitable teaching practices should be followed in classrooms,

¹² Source: PCLive website: <https://pclive.peacecorps.gov/pclive/index.php/library/general-subjects/diversity>. Accessed 07 February 2022.

¹³ Gender Considerations Checklist: Gender Equitable Schools, PCLive website. URL: <https://pclive.peacecorps.gov/pclive/index.php/library/general-subjects/diversity/item/1146-gender-considerations-checklist-gender-equitable-schools>. Accessed 07 February 2022.

and colleagues can help chart student-teacher interactions and give each other suggestions on how to improve.

- Create a safety map of the school, including students' routes to and from school, with separate groups of girls and boys, male and female teachers, and map formal and non-formal health services and other resources (library, police station, etc.) with separate groups of girls and boys and female and male community stakeholders.
- Bring these groups together, as appropriate, to identify any possible areas of concern and develop recommendations, and identify representatives from the groups to present information from the mapping exercises to the broader community.
- Student leadership can be strengthened by letting students themselves develop classroom rules and responsibilities. Opportunities should also be identified to enhance girls' and young women's leadership.
- Identify and attend in-service or online training focused on safe, gender equitable schools; potential opportunities for training of interested teachers around safe, gender equitable schools should also be pursued and encouraged by head teachers.

The Peace Corps resource library has a similar checklist on *Engaging Men and Boys Around Positive Masculinities*;¹⁴ search for it online (URL given in footnote) and implement the same to help make a positive, gender-friendly environment for boys as well.

The use of these resources should be informed by regular dialogue with your colleagues, students, their parents, and community members. Identify which gender norms and ideas are the most prevalent in your neighbourhood and community, and which ones you must tackle and dismantle through your interactions with the students and the larger community. Lastly, remember that gender sensitisation can be slow, laborious work as we often attempt to be critical towards ideas and differences that we have been taught are 'natural' all of our lives. However, it is important to make gender-sensitivity a part of all our interactions as teachers since helping children break free of the restrictive gender norms and stereotypes is one of the greatest contributions we can make towards their efforts to live a content, productive, and fulfilled life.

¹⁴ Gender Considerations Checklist: Engaging Men and Boys Around Positive Masculinities, PCLive website. URL: <https://pclive.peacecorps.gov/pclive/index.php/library/general-subjects/diversity/item/1145-gender-considerations-checklist-engaging-men-and-boys-around-positive-masculinities>. Accessed 07 February 2022.





Activities for Your Workshop

Activity 9: Making Our Own Plans and Visions

Duration: **45 minutes**

Methods: **Group discussion**

FOR THE FACILITATOR(S):

This session is aimed to be a free-form discussion with the participants to talk about how they plan to change their teaching practices post this workshop. Encourage the participants to list out 3-5 big changes they will strive to make in the way they teach in order to create a more gender-responsive classroom for their students. How will they track their own progress? What goals have they set for themselves as they move towards gender-responsive teaching practices?

Share with the participants some checklists and resources (provided in the additional resources section in Chapters 3 and 4) that can help them monitor their teaching practices and track the status of students in their class. They can also be introduced to other resources that can help them as teachers (reckoner on how to prevent physical and sexual abuse, for example). Discuss how to search for more resources on gender responsive teaching practices in the future. Some places they could look for resources to use in class:

- *Databases like UNESCO, FAWE, IREX and other international gender justice forums*
- *Government websites like UGC, MoWCD (BBBP)*
- *YouTube and Google Scholar for open access resources*
- *Drawing from popular culture like films, music, news articles and other everyday examples*



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APPENDICES

A. Child Sexual Abuse: Dispelling Myths

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a serious issue that warrants our attention and vigilance as teachers and educators. Research shows that the prevalence of CSA in India is 53%; this affects boys equally, and more than 20% were subjected to severe forms of sexual abuse.¹⁵ Let us look at some some myths that surround the subject of CSA:

- **Myth: CSA means the child has been raped.**
Child Sexual Abuse includes both touching and non-touching Behaviors (but need not be limited only to these acts).
- **Myth: Children can lie about abuse.**
Children lack the language to “make up stories” of such abuse and do not have the knowledge needed to express it. Though they feel extremely overwhelmed and distressed by such attention, they often find it difficult to talk about it.
- **Myth: Only strangers abuse children sexually.**
This is not true; research evidence world over indicates that in most cases (over 85%) the abuse is done by relatives, family, friends or someone known and trusted by the child.
- **Myth: Child abuse is often accompanied by physical violence.**
In most reported cases, the abuser is not physically violent, but used emotional manipulation to coerce the victim.

Watch the short film titled *Komal*,¹⁶ which is made available by PIB India in multiple Indian languages:

<https://youtu.be/5cBQtZRbRJU>.

You can read more about CSA and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POSCO) Act in the following resources:

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: Module for Master Trainers. Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, 2015. URL: <https://wcd.nic.in/bbbp-schemes/trainers-training-module-english>, pp. 83-90. Accessed 07 February 2022.

T. Raghav, S. Seema, M. Merlin. “Annexure 13: Directives to prevent physical and sexual abuse of students” *Understanding Gender: A training module for teachers*. Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT), 2014, pp. 87-88. URL: http://strive.ishtm.ac.uk/system/files/attachments/Understanding%20Gender_Teachers%20Training%20Manual%20.pdf. Accessed 07 February 2022.

¹⁵ Tyagi, S, and S Karande. “Child sexual abuse in India: A wake-up call.” *Journal of postgraduate medicine* vol. 67,3 (2021): 125-129. doi:10.4103/jpgm.JPGM_264_21. URL: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8445113/>. Accessed 13 February 2022.

¹⁶ *KOMAL A film on Child Sexual Abuse CSA English*, Channel: PIB India, Date of Upload: 22 July 2016, URL: <https://youtu.be/5cBQtZRbRJU>. Accessed 13 February 2022.

The POSCO Act is very child-friendly on paper; however, CSA is often not reported as the abuser is often a family member. There is a lot of pressure on the child and often the mother to not report in such situations, so as to not 'break up' the family.

As teachers and educators, what can we do? Here are a few pointers to help you be vigilant:

- Be observant for any significant behaviour change in the children.
- Have an open atmosphere – be willing to listen to the child.
- Always believe the child who reports such abuse.
- Reach out to the family to ensure the abuse is stopped.
- Approach NGOs that can further help with such cases.

Here are some such organisations you can contact for help:

Childline India

24x7 helpline number: 1098.

Website: <https://www.childlineindia.org/>.

My Choices Foundation

Website: <https://mychoicesfoundation.org/>

Tulir, Chennai

TULIR- Centre for the Prevention and Healing Child Sexual Abuse.

Arpan, Mumbai

A step towards prevention of child sexual abuse - Arpan NGO



Image credits: KRITI

B. Suggested Format for a Short Workshop on Gender Sensitisation

Topic: Introduction to Gender

Session time: 2 hours

Participants: Teachers and Parents

Material required for the session: Projector/Tabs/Blackboard/ printed handouts and feedback forms

Methodology to be followed:

- Discussion method-starts discussion using an incident or a question
- Explanation method – Direct
- Activity method – small skit play/group work
- Visual method –showing a chart or picture or a video

Introduction of Trainer: 2 minutes *(about self and session)*

Introduction of participants: 8 minutes *(ask participants to tell name, education and work they do)*

Activity 1 — Gender: 'Natural' or Social?

45 minutes

1. On the blackboard, make two columns titled 'Men' and 'Women'. Ask the participants to help you fill up each column with the traits, behaviours, and characteristics most associated with the respective gender. The list will probably look something like this:

Women	Men
Delicate	Muscular
Docile	Domineering
Mother (provides ovum)	Father (provides sperm)
Sensitive	Good looking
Housework	Breadwinner
Caring	Controlling
Bears children	Honour
Love	Protector
Sari	Pants and shirt
Long hair	Beard
Cries easily	Aggressive
Jealous	Strong
Breastfeeds	Drinks alcohol/smokes

Men	Women
Delicate	Muscular
Docile	Domineering
Mother (provides ovum)	Father (provides sperm)
Sensitive	Good looking
Housework	Breadwinner
Caring	Controlling
Bears children	Honour
Love	Protector
Sari	Pants and shirt
Long hair	Beard
Cries easily	Aggressive
Jealous	Strong
Breastfeeds	Drinks alcohol/smokes

2. Make sure the traits highlighted in bold above (childbearing, breast-feeding) are included in the table. If the participants do not think of these, you can bring them up and ask where they can go in the table. Apart from this, do not prompt for any other traits, and do not make any changes to what they are suggesting.
3. Once the participants are satisfied with the two columns, go ahead and switch the titles: 'Men' should now be 'Women' and vice versa. It will look something like this:
4. Now ask the participants which traits do not belong in the new columns. For every gender trait that is a stereotype/popular perception, ask them if they can recall seeing or hearing of an exception. For example:
 - *Do you know men or boys who cry easily?*
 - *Have you heard of or known women who are breadwinners for their family?*
 - *Have you seen or heard of men cooking, cleaning etc. (cooks, chefs, housekeepers etc.)?*
 - *Can you think of any aggressive, strong women in your social circles or community?*
5. By the end of this discussion, guide the participants to realise that the only characteristics that do not belong in the new columns are the ones which are controlled by the sexual characteristics of men and women: providing the ovum or sperm; childbearing; and breast-feeding. Apart from these, all 'manly' or 'womanly' characteristics can easily be seen in the other gender. Emphasise on this point.
6. Now close the activity by talking to the participants about the difference in sex and gender. You can make use of these Facilitator's Notes to address the participants:

Facilitator's Notes: Sex and Gender

Our sex is biological; it is defined by the bodily characteristics we are born with. Largely, it defines whether we bear children and breastfeed (female), or if we provide the sperm for the conception of children (male).

[It is important to remember however, that even these physical or 'natural' differences are not set in stone: many people are born with both or neither of male and female characteristics, and this does not make them any less valid as our fellow human beings.]

Our gender is social; it is defined by the behaviour and attitudes that we learn as we grow up. Largely, it is based on some expectations or stereotypes about what is 'manly' behaviour and what is 'womanly' behaviour, and our parents, friends, teachers, and communities constantly teach us this behaviour by telling us how 'good/proper/real men' and 'good/proper/real women' should behave.

But as we just saw in the activity above, when we start looking around us, we see

that behaviours associated with one gender can easily be seen in people of the opposite gender as well...which means these differences are not 'natural' at all, but rather something we as a society have decided is the 'right' way!

For a lot of people, these gender roles may give a sense of identity, purpose and fulfilment in life. However, it is very important to remember that these are not 'natural' roles but rather man-made roles. So while some women may like to be mothers and caretakers by choice—or some men may want to protect and provide for their family by choice—there may be many men or women who do not want to take up these socially assigned roles: and their choice should be respected as well. If something is learned, it can be unlearned as well.

In a vibrant, diverse society like ours, there are a variety of different kinds of people, with different choices, likes, attributes, and goals, and to respect and to support them all is to recognise the beauty of our shared existence.

Activity 2 — Discussion on Gender-based violence 25 minutes

1. If you have a projector available, you can show a small clip from a popular Telugu/Hindi song which shows sexual harassment as a way or romance/wooing the heroine.
2. Ask the participants to think of all the ways in which heroes usually try to woo heroines in films:
 - *following her around as she goes to work or to college*
 - *spying on her and her friends*
 - *sneaking into her room/house at night or getting her number from somewhere and calling/messaging her*
 - *cornering her somewhere and bullying her into going out with him/telling her to not talk to anyone else because she is "his"*
 - *forcibly catching hold of her, sometimes hurting her/forcing himself on her to be "assertive" like a "real man"*
 - *threatening her with some harm to her or her family/telling her he will kill himself if she does not become his girlfriend/wife*
3. Many of us may have fantasised about such a romance while growing up because we watched our favourite stars doing these things on the big screen. Now ask the women in the room if

they have ever experienced this kind of behaviour from someone unwanted. How did it feel?

[If any participant(s) is comfortable sharing their story, ask them to do so. If not, talk about it in more general terms]

4. Discuss that in real life, all such behaviours are most often aggressive, unwanted, and scary to the person on the receiving end. They feel exactly like what they are: **harassment**. Make use of the **facilitator's notes** to expand upon this point:

Facilitator's Notes: Sexual Harrassment

Every other day, we hear of sexual harassment and violence that women face: **stalking, acid attacks, rape, dowry deaths and honour killings**. In our everyday lives, there are many other behaviours that may not make it to the news or seem as 'serious', but these too are **harassment** and cannot be allowed. These include stalking, bullying, forcing someone into talking to you, intimidating with your physical strength or with unpleasant consequences, video recording someone without their knowledge etc.: you may have heard many of these things being done by young men to 'woo' (impress) girls that they like.

There is nothing heroic in harassing someone! Parents, teachers and community members often dismiss such behaviours by saying things like 'boys will be boys'. But this is not true. No one is naturally inclined to be violent towards someone else. These behaviours are learned and normalised which makes them seem 'normal' behaviour for boys and men. But by saying 'boys/men will be boys/men', we are implying that they do not have control over their own behaviour and impulses. This is not true. Boys and men are capable of being respectful towards others too. As with gender roles, these behaviours are also learned over time: through films, songs, and observing other men around them indulging in such behaviours.

The good news is: what is learned can be unlearned. However, this requires effort and a shift in what we as a society say a 'real man' is.

As a society, it is our job to socialise boys into becoming men who value **consent** in all relationships. Right from a young age, we must teach all children—but especially boys—that it is important to respect others' wishes and views. If someone does not feel the same way about you, it is important to respect their feelings. This is what makes a **healthy view** of love and romance. Being "rejected" by someone is not a bad thing. It is important to stop thinking of refusal as insult. **Isn't it truly heroic to treat someone you like with respect, and not force yourself upon them if they do not like you?** Surely, no one wants to keep the person they love hostage in a romantic relationship? A relationship that is based on coercion/force will never truly be a healthy relationship of equals.

The first step to changing the concept of a "real man" is to teach boys and young men that mutual respect and consent are the most important pillars of any relationship, be it friendship (male or female) or romantic/sexual relationships.

Activity 3 — Barriers in our Lives: Part I

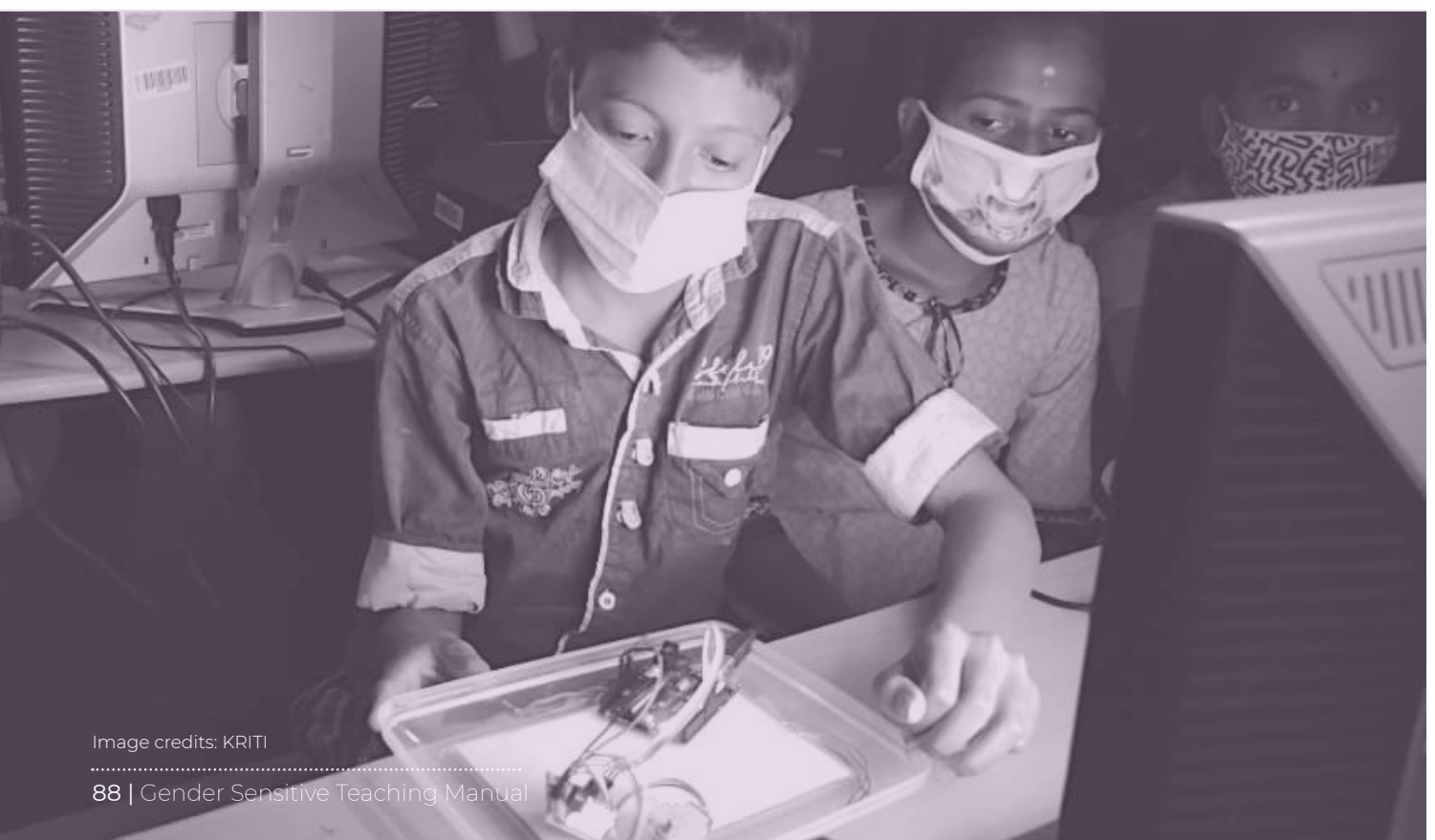
40 minutes

1. If you have a projector available, screen *Ammayi*, a short film by Mohan Krishna Indraganti. Begin a discussion by asking the participants the following questions:

- *What are some of the barriers women and men face? Are these all different, or do we share some common ones?*
- *Looking at your life, what barriers have you faced?*

(This may or may not be related to gender; but it could be a good starting point for thinking about one's life and how gender intersects with other aspects of one's identities like caste, religion, age, disability etc.)

2. Note down all the barriers talked about by the participants, trying to group them together in categories on a blackboard. Once most of the participants have had a chance to share some barrier they have faced, move on to the next activity given here.
3. For each example that participants have given (written on the blackboard), discuss what kind of barrier is being highlighted. Make use of the **facilitator's notes** given here to expand on this point. After explaining each type of barrier for a few minutes, make sure you encourage a discussion by asking the questions given in bold in this box:
4. Close the session by encouraging the participants to continue thinking about everything discussed in this session: gender roles, as well as various barriers. Ask them to make a list of five things they can change in their own lives to help make small differences in their own thought process and attitudes. If you have some time remaining, you can ask a few participants to share their lists with everyone.



Facilitator's Notes: *Different Kinds of Barriers*

There exist different kinds of barriers that can hinder a person's life aspirations and come in the way of their well being. Some types are mentioned below:

Social and cultural: These barriers are a result of certain man-made structures that help construct society. While we are social animals, not all social and cultural structures are beneficial to all members of the society. Gender is one such construct: we often see that the stereotypes that exist around gender become a barrier for women (and men) who do not wish to behave according to these “rules”. There is often discrimination against them because they are seen as “bad” women or men. But as we have seen, this kind of discrimination is wrong and not valid. Similarly, caste and religion can also become barriers.

Can you think of some examples in each case?

Structural: These come in the form of institutions. Whether it is smaller institutions like family, school, place of work etc., or larger institutions like government, big companies etc.—different people can face different kinds of discrimination in such places. To avoid only favouring people who already have advantage over others, some institutions have ‘positive discrimination’ rules: like reserving some posts for women, minority groups like SC/ST employees, people from economically weaker sections, etc. ***Can you think of other kinds of positive discrimination? What are some other institutions that you can think of that have barriers for people from different walks of life (gender, religion, caste, age, sexuality etc.)?***

Legal: Sometimes, laws also make it difficult for some groups of people to flourish in the same way as others. For example, women did not have the right to vote in many parts of the world until hundred years ago; some countries still do not allow them to vote. ***Can you think of some other laws that discriminate against some sections of the society negatively? Can you think of some laws that have tried to reverse this damage? (for example PCPNDT Act, Vishakha guidelines, repeal of section 377, etc.)***

Physical/Infrastructural: Small things can have a big effect on who feels encouraged to pursue certain careers/dreams. For example, NASA astronaut suits were not usable for women initially—this was not identified until women were finally recruited by NASA as astronauts! Think of the city: a footpath, however crowded, might be suitable for someone who is capable of walking; but for someone in a wheelchair, it might be completely unusable. Women often find it difficult to stay outdoors for longer periods of time due to a lack of clean, safe and accessible public toilets. Women also tend to not occupy public spaces because of a lack of well-populated, free, accessible well-lit public spaces (gardens, chai stalls, public benches etc.). ***Can you think of other barriers of this kind which keep certain people out of certain spaces?***

C. Handout for Workshop Participants

Gender

1. There is no difference between a man and a woman except sexual characteristics.
2. Sperm is produced by only men and ovum/egg is produced by only women. Menstruation and breast feeding is also possible only for women, and men cannot become pregnant.
3. Perception that women can do certain work and men can do certain work is a socially created idea.
4. All kinds of work, sports, jobs can be carried out by both. Only individual attitude and energy levels make the difference. Some examples –
5. Both can do household work like cooking, sweeping, cleaning, washing, and taking care of family members.
6. Both can do jobs like driving, flying aeroplanes, office work, joining the army and air force, travel and marketing, etc.

Overcoming social barriers

1. Believe in your strengths and not in what the society says.
2. Think out of the box and go ahead with your dream goal or job, as there is no difference in the natural ability between men and women.
3. Education/knowledge/skills, physical fitness, mental maturity and emotional intelligence are the pillars of success in both men and women.
4. Explain and discuss their roles and responsibilities with your daughters and sons equally.
5. Find ways to erase barriers laid by the society and elderly family members between daughters and sons, wife and husbands, etc.



Image credits: KRITI

Let us Remove Gender Bias

- Girls and Boys should be treated alike by all
- Both must be given equal opportunities in education, career and life
- Women must receive equal pay and job opportunity in all fields, on par with men
- Parents should invest in girl's education
- Boys must be taught housework
- Children should be given the option to choose whatever subject or career they are interested in
- Girls must have convenient access to toilets in schools and public places
- Women must have job security during pregnancy along with sufficient maternity leave

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National Emergency Number	112
National Commission for Women	011-26944880/ 26944883
Women Police Station (Begumpet)	040-27853508
Women Safety	94906 16555 040-2785 2355
Women safety App - HAWK EYE	



Kriti is a not-for-profit organization working in the slums of Hyderabad since 2009 to help provide livelihoods for women and education for children.

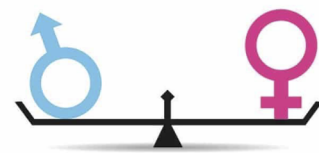
Education



Women's Skill Development



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Project Samatha

Gender Sensitization Program

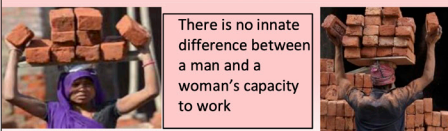
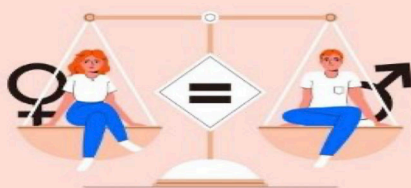
Project Samatha provides gender sensitization training to teachers to become socially sensitive and inclusive educators, thereby contributing to the larger goal of raising a more fair-minded and compassionate child.

Kriti Social Initiatives teamed up with scholars from the University of Hyderabad and Maulana Azad National Urdu University to design this program which combines research, curriculum development and delivery of training. The program is sponsored by the US Consulate in Hyderabad, under the 2019 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund. The program is being implemented in government and private schools in the Shaikpet Mandal of Hyderabad. The direct beneficiaries include both teachers and parents.

GENDER SENSITIZATION PROGRAM

What is Gender?

Gender is the perceived difference between man and woman based on social and cultural differences. Sexual characteristics are by birth but these do not define gender. Man and woman are born equal and our society influences us to differentiate between them. All kinds of work, sports and any activity can be done by both.



Women should get equal wages for equal work and have the same access to work opportunities.



STOP GENDER BASED VIOLENCE



Verbal Violence	Sexual Violence	Physical Violence	Economic Violence
Scolding, insulting, shouting, threatening, etc.	Kissing, touching, hugging and having sex without partner's consent	Beating, thrashing, manhandling	Taking away or denying property and money, lack of financial freedom

OVERCOME SOCIAL BARRIERS

Remove Gender inequality -

- Stop child marriages
- Build more toilets for women
- Share house work and child care
- Stop gender violence
- Encourage girls in sports
- Build leadership capacities among girls
- Boys and girls must have mutual respect for each other



Believe in your strengths and not in what society says.

Education, skills, physical fitness, mental maturity and emotional intelligence are the pillars of success for both men and women.

లింగ వివక్షత ని తొలగిద్దాం

- బాలికలకు మరియు బాలురకు అన్ని అవకాశాలు ఒకేలా చూడాలి
- విద్య, వృత్తి మరియు జీవితంలో ఇద్దరికీ సమాన అవకాశాలు ఇవ్వాలి
- స్త్రీలు కూడా పురుషులతో సమానంగా అన్ని రంగాలలో సమాన వేతనం మరియు ఉద్యోగ అవకాశాన్ని పొందాలి
- తల్లిదండ్రులు బాలికల విద్యలో పెట్టుబడి పెట్టాలి
- పిల్లలకు అసక్తి ఉన్న ఏదైనా విషయం లేదా వృత్తిని ఎంచుకునే అవకాశం ఇవ్వాలి
- పాఠశాలలు మరియు బహిరంగ ప్రదేశాలలో బాలికలకు మరుగుదొడ్ల సౌకర్యం ఉండాలి
- గర్భధారణ సమయంలో మహిళలకు తగినంత ప్రసూతి సెలవులతో పాటు ఉద్యోగ భద్రత ఉండాలి



క్రిటి సంస్థ 2009 నుండి హైదరాబాద్ లోని ఫిల్మ్ నగర్ కాలనీలలో మహిళలకు జీవనపాధి మరియు పిల్లలకు విద్యను అందించడంలో కృషి చేస్తోంది

విద్య



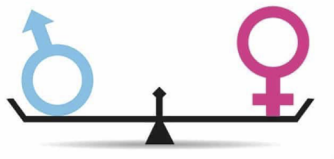

మహిళల నైపుణ్య అభివృద్ధి



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ప్రాజెక్ట్ సమత
లింగ ఆధారిత (వివక్ష) కార్యక్రమం

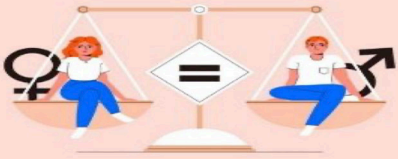
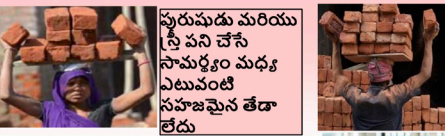
ప్రాజెక్ట్ సమత, ఉపాధ్యాయులు సామాజికంగా సమగ్ర అధ్యాపకులుగా మారడానికి లింగ వివక్ష ఆధారిత శిక్షణను అందిస్తుంది, తద్వారా మానవత్వం మరియు కరుణ, దయ గల పిల్లలను పెంచే ఉన్నతమైన లక్ష్యానికి దోహదం చేస్తుంది.

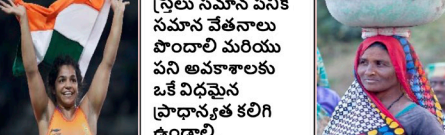
క్రిటి సోపల్ ఇనిషియేటివ్స్, హైదరాబాద్ విశ్వవిద్యాలయం మరియు మౌలానా అబాద్ నేషనల్ ఉర్దూ విశ్వవిద్యాలయ ప్రొఫెసర్లతో కలిసి పరిశోధన, పాఠ్యాంశాల అభివృద్ధి మరియు శిక్షణను అందించే ఈ కార్యక్రమాన్ని రూపొందించారు. ఈ కార్యక్రమాన్ని 2019 అలుమ్ని ఎంగేజ్ మెంట్ ఇన్నోవేషన్ ఫండ్ (AEIF) కింద హైదరాబాద్ లోని అమెరికా కాన్సులేట్ స్పాన్సర్ చేసింది. ఈ కార్యక్రమాన్ని హైదరాబాద్ షేక్ పేట మండలంలోని ప్రభుత్వ, ప్రైవేట్ పాఠశాలల్లో అమలు చేస్తున్నారు. ప్రత్యక్ష లబ్ధిదారులలో ఉపాధ్యాయులు మరియు తల్లిదండ్రులు ఉన్నారు.

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Women safety App - HAWK EYE	

లింగ వివక్షత అంటే ఏమిటి?

లింగ వివక్షత అనేది స్త్రీ పురుషుల మధ్య సాంఘిక మరియు సాంస్కృతిక పరంగా నమ్మబడిన భేదము. లింగ వివక్షత అనేది స్త్రీ పురుషుల మధ్య సాంఘిక మరియు సాంస్కృతిక పరంగా నమ్మబడిన భేదము. లైంగిక లక్షణాలు పుట్టుకతోనే ఉంటాయి కానీ ఇవి లింగాన్ని నిర్వచించవు. స్త్రీ, పురుషులు సమానంగా జన్మించారు కానీ మన సమాజం వారి మధ్య లేని తేడాను గుర్తించేలా మనల్ని ప్రభావితం చేస్తుంది. అన్ని రకాల పనులు, ఆటలు, వృత్తులు ఇద్దరూ సమానంగా నిర్వహించగలరు



పురుషుడు మరియు స్త్రీ పని చేసే సామర్థ్యం మధ్య ఏటువంటి సహజమైన తేడా లేదు

స్త్రీలు సమాన పనికి సమాన వేతనాలు పొందాలి మరియు పని అవకాశాలకు ఒకే విధమైన ప్రాధాన్యత కలిగి ఉండాలి.

లింగ ఆధారిత హింసను ఆపండి



శారీరక హింస

తిట్టడం, అపహరించడం, అరవడం, బెదిరించడం మొదలైనవి



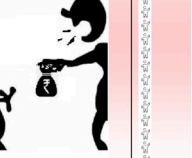
లైంగిక హింస

భాగస్వామి అనుమతి లేకుండా ముద్దు పెట్టుకోవడం, తాకడం, కౌగిలించుకోవడం మరియు లైంగిక సంబంధం కలిగి ఉండటం



శారీరక హింస

కొట్టడం, నెట్టడం, పట్టుకోవడం



ఆర్థిక హింస

ఆస్తి మరియు డబ్బు యివ్వకపోవడం, ఆర్థిక స్వేచ్ఛ లేకపోవడం

సామాజిక అడ్డంకులను అధిగమించండి

లింగ అసమానతను తొలగించండి

- బాల్యవివాహాలను ఆపండి
- మహిళలకు ఎక్కువ మరుగుదొడ్డు నిర్మించండి
- ఇంటి పనిని పంచుకోండి
- తొమ్మిట్టపుల సంరక్షణను పంచుకోండి
- లింగ హింసను ఆపండి
- క్రీడలలో అమ్మాయిలను ప్రోత్సహించండి
- బాలికలలో నాయకత్వ సామర్థ్యాలను పెంపొందించుకోండి



సమాజం చెప్పేదాన్ని కాకుండా మీ బలాన్ని నమ్మండి.

విద్య, నైపుణ్యాలు, శారీరక ధృఢత్వం, మానసిక పరిపక్వత మరియు భావోద్వేగ మేధస్సు పురుషులు మరియు మహిళలు ఇద్దరికీ విజయ స్తంభాలు.



Feedback Form

1. Do you agree with the points raised in this session on Gender Sensitization?

Yes / No

2. Do you find differences between bringing up a boy and a girl in your family?

Yes / No

3. Is there any change in your thought process regarding the way you treat girls and boys?

Yes / No

4. Would you carefully observe your surroundings and point out if there is any discrepancy in the treatment of girls and boys, and try to sort it out?

Yes / No

5. Write any one such practice in your family that shows gender difference and you would like to change:

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