

Unit 4 (A)
Gender Challenges – The role of Schools, Peers, and Teachers

Introduction: - Education is a catalyst for social change. The Expert committee on Gender and Education set in 2012 by the National Commission for women recognized the need for gender education.

The Role of Schools

- Schools have an important role to play as society moves towards gender equality. Gender sensitive curricula, programs and teaching methods will help to achieve this goal.
- Schools can team up with other organization to ensure the gender equity and gender equality becomes a reality in practice and not just a promise on paper.
- One such a noteworthy endeavor is the Gender Equity Movement in School (GEMS) which was started to promote gender equality and reduce violence by engaging students in critical thinking and self-reflection.
- Participatory methodologies engage students in relevant interaction and reflection about key issue of gender and violence.
- A school is a learning institution with broad duties that go beyond traditional teaching-learning.
- It is a place where young people learn about social relationship, norms and values.
- Schools play an important role in teaching, modelling and reinforcing gender roles.
- School must promote gender roles that support equality and foster a healthy relationship between males & females, e.g. – Involve both boys and girls while planning a school programme. Avoid genders-based division of work.
- A well designed life skills programme can help to promote healthy attitudes, behaviours and interactions. This will help the student to make informed choice communicate the same clearly.

Thus the school ethos, the value that the school portrays and stands for the ambience and zero tolerance for gender inequality will help to nurture a gender friendly environment.

The Role of Peers

- Peers influence the language we use and the choice we make. The self -esteem encouraged by their peer group.
- Peer group often have great influence upon gender role equality. If a peer group strongly holds to a conventional gender, social norms, members of society predicted by gender roles.
- But if there is no unanimous peer agreement, gender role co-relate with behaviour. e.g. - A boy who likes to play games by girls may be called as ‘sissy’.

- A girls who climbs tree may be called as ‘Tomboy’ Gender ridiculed more for their non-conformed such, interaction reinforce gender stereotypes may reinforce gender inequality.
- Peer culture manifests itself in the form of a person’s thoughts and action.
- Group pressure is extremely strong and it requires a strong individual to challenge unhealthy beliefs and practices.
- Often peer group display behaviour that is portrayed through media. Some peer groups may influenced by some other group.
- Care must be taken to ensure that appropriate roles models are present.
- Here media must act with responsibility to ensure that gender unfriendly act like eve teasing are not glorified on screen.
- Finally, the influence on group on the individual and individual on a group plays an important role in challenging gender stereotypes and changing mind sets.

The Roles of Teachers

- Teachers attitudes play an important role in promoting gender equity and gender equality.
- The teacher is hold in high esteem by students. Every word and action of the teachers molds the thoughts and wises of the child.
- The teachers need to exercise the great care regarding his/her interaction with the students.
- Teachers promotes gender equality in a number of ways –
 1. Children often bring stereotyped notions due to what they see and hear at home or in the society around them and helps students to analyze these notions and discern for themselves what is right or wrong.
 2. Encourage students to participate in activities according to their interests and aptitude, one often finds that in some schools, coaching in sports use football or hockey is arranged exclusively for boys and not for girls, this is to be avoided.
- The manner in which the media depicts men and women colours the wishes of the students unconsciously, their own perceptions get molded based on what is portrayed. For examples televisions, serials relegate silent, suffering and weeping women and applaud macho man. Teachers could organize regular discussions about the films and serials that students watch and dispel wrong notions about gender.
- Childrens often share their dreams with their teachers. Teachers can be catalysts who provide the impetus to let students achieve their dreams. Examples- When Khushi said she wants to be an IAS officer, some of her friends said. “Oh, but that would mean a transferable job and that won’t be suitable once you marry”.

Here, teacher’s response in this case was it perfectly fine for Khushi to pursue her dreams. We do have some women IAS officers doing great work in our country. They do justice to their job as well as to their family.

Unit 4b Role of curriculum and textbooks in dealing with gender issues in school.

- Curriculum refers to all activities carried out in educational institutions. Every society has different gender issues, it is necessary to examine these issues and see that curriculum address these issues.
- Rousseau advocated different curriculum for girls and boys. He advocated physical training for woman so that they would be physically strong to produce healthy children.
- He believed in education that would make girls obedient and industrious. They have to learn to suffer injustices of their husbands and to endure the wrong of their husbands without complaint.
- Gandhiji's basic education advocated home science as a part of curriculum.
- The University Education Commission headed by Dr. Radhakrishnan recommended for co-education colleges, expansion of educational opportunities for girls, provision for equal remuneration in case of female teachers.
- The Commission Report states the greatest profession for woman is and probably will continue to be that of home maker.
- Chapter XII emphasises on courses like home science, economics, nursing, teaching and fine arts.
- The Hansben Mehta Committee (1962) – women should be educated to enable to follow careers of their choice and neglecting responsibilities of child rearing and home making
- Some recommendations are –
 1. No differentiation to be made in curriculum for boys and girls at primary stage.
 2. Remove gender stereotype from the tender minds of children and build up new and healthy minds.
 3. Home science should be common curriculum for girls and boys.
 4. At the end of secondary stage there should be bifurcation of courses into various streams.
 5. Universities should develop a variety of courses suiting specific needs of girls and women.

Curriculum effective in promoting gender equality and gender equity:-

1. The curriculum should be gender sensitive

Curriculum needs to be screened and gender insensitive material should be screened out

A gender sensitive education chooses a doll car for child to play, which would develop skills and not according to the sex of the child.

Stories and rhymes need to be examined if they portray either sex in poor light. E.g. students should be made aware of people like Helen Keller or Malala.

2. The curriculum should be responsive to gender issues:

Dowry, atrocities against women, discrimination against women, these issues need to be addressed seriously through curriculum.

3. The curriculum must foster gender empowerment:

A good curriculum focuses on gender empowerment by emphasising self actualisation of any individual. The cognitive, creative and critical capacities of individual need to be nurtured through curriculum. The curriculum must include topics like gender related laws and rights of men and women.

4. The curriculum must cut across gender barriers:

Subjects like maths or science are considered as domain of males. Arts and humanities were suitable for female. This notion should be changed, both boys and girls pursue and excel at various subjects. Home science and child psychology are beneficial to both male and females in their future role as parents.

Gender and the hidden curriculum –

The hidden curriculum is the unspoken and unwritten norms, values and behaviours that children pick up in school. Socialisation in the school influences individuals notion about gender and gender roles.

e.g. children in the elementary school are taught by female teachers and higher education by male teachers. This gives an impression to child that females are better suited to teach elementary classes. This is hidden curriculum in operation.

The hidden curriculum will continue to be part of the curriculum and educational process. It can never be eliminated. It is an effective vehicle to ensure gender equality.

Rules regarding the uniform worn by students (girls – skirt and boys – trousers) emphasizes gender differences.

Hidden curriculum can help to remove these gender inequalities.

Gender and Textbooks

- Textbooks are a vital tool in the hands of parents, students and teachers.
- Textbooks are core of the educational policy as they reflect notional goals of education. They transmit models of social behaviour norms and values and thus mould students.
- They are a vehicle for social change.
- Textbook depict both men and women in their contents. Poem, stories have men and women characters. History portrays the work of leaders and administrators.
- Textbooks of science may contain material about the discoveries and inventions made by scientist both male and female.
- Tuwer, Theresa, Marie Antonitte report that textbooks portray women as mothers, wives and low status workers.
- Girls internalise these stereotypical female behaviour role. Male are depicted as strong, powerful and assertive.
- This reinforces gender stereotypes and become an impediment in progress.
- National Policy for the empowerment of women 2001 stated the importance of making the textbook gender sensitive and bias and stereotype free.
- The curriculum should address the cause of gender discrimination.

Guidelines to ensure this are:-

1. Textbooks must avoid portraying girls and women in traditional roles.
2. Examples having gender inequality shall be avoided e.g Rani gets 2 chocolates and Raja gets 4 chocolates etc.
3. Care should be taken to include gender neutral language.
4. Language textbooks must be compiled mindfully so that both male and female authors are sufficiently represented.
5. Textbooks of subjects like political science and sociology should contain contents on social problems that are gender based.
6. Textbooks must contain stories of women who have excelled in male dominated profession.
7. 3 dimensions of gender bias should be addressed in textbooks
 - a. Under-representation
 - b. Stereotyped gender roles, occupations and attributes
 - c. Presentation on positive gender contents and role models.

Unit 4 (C) Contemporary Women Role Models in India Urban and Rural.

Women with influence and power have the ability to transform a generation. Here are some female role models who inspire challenge and influence the way our world works.

1. URBAN ROLE MODELS

(A) KIRAN BEDI:

- Kiran Bedi was born on 9th June 1949 in Amritsar, Punjab.
- She is a retired Indian Police officer, social activist and a politician.
- She is the first woman to join the Indian Police Service (I P S)
- She took voluntary retirement in 2007 as Director General, Bureau of Police Research and Development.
- As a child, Kiran Bedi used to play Tennis and won many prizes.
- She obtained her B.A in English (Hon) and Masters in Political Science.
- She has a degree in Law from University of Delhi and has obtained a Doctorate from the department of Social Science at the IIT Delhi.
- She started her career as a lecturer of Political Science
- Later she cleared the civil Services examination and became an IPS Officer.
- She introduces a number of reforms in the management of Tihar Jail, Delhi.
- In 1987 she launched an NGO named Navjyoti Indian Foundation. This NGO aims at de- addiction and rehabilitation of the drug addicts.
- She also started India vision foundation in 1994 that has been working for police reforms, prison reform , woman empowerment for her contribution to the society, she has received many awards.
 - Presidents Gallantry Award -1979
 - Magsaysay Award -1994
 - International Woman Award -1992.

(B) KIRAN MAJUMDAR SHAW:

- She was born to Gujrati parents in Bangalore on 28th March 1953.
- She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Zoology.
- She was India's first female brew master and worked as a brew master for one year.
- She started her business at the age of 21 years in Biopharmaceuticals.
- She faced many challenges as a woman entrepreneur.
- In 2004, she started a corporate social responsibility wing at Biocon . This foundation focuses on the areas of health education and infrastructure in rural areas in Karnataka.
- She developed Arogya Raksha Yojana to offer clinical care, generic medicines and basic tests for those who cannot afford them.
- She has also started the Majumdar Shaw Medical centre to address the challenges associated with Cancer.

- For her efforts, she received Padma Shri (1989) and Padma Bhushan (2005) from the Government of India.

(C) PRITI PATKAR :

- She is an Indian social worker and human rights activist.
- She was born in Mumbai
- She is a Gold Medalist from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences where she completed her master in Social work.
- She has been working for the protection and rescue of children and women victims of human trafficking for the past years.
- In 1986 she founded the organization 'Prerana' that has done pioneering work in the red-light districts of Mumbai.
- Some of her pioneering works includes-
- World's first Night care shelter in the midst of a red- light area.
- First comprehensive Education Support Programme for children living in red light areas.
- First network of Anti Trafficking organization
- First comprehensive programme for AIDS affected children.
- She has received many awards. Few are young Achiever Award (2000) (Indo American) Late Kalpana Chawla Award (2003) Hirkani Puraskar (2013)

2. RURAL WOMEN ROLE MODELS

(A) ELA BHATT:

- She was born on 7th September 19
- She is an Indian Co-operative organiser, activist and Gandhian.
- She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in English from M.T.B college in Surat
- In 1954, she received her degree in Law and a Gold Medal for her work on Hindu Law.
- She started her career teaching English at SNDT Women's University in Mumbai.
- Ela Bhatt undertook to organize self – employed women into a union as there were no laws protecting self employed women.
- In 1972, the Self- Employed women's Association (SEWA) was established.
- She has been the members of 'The Elders' since the group was formed in 2007.
- She is involved with 'The Elders initiative on equality of women and girls including the issue of child marriage.
- She is also a part of the international labour, co-operative women and micro-Finance movements.
- She is first of the foundation of woman's world Banking in 1979.

- She has received many Awards for her contribution to the Society.
 - Padma Shri in 1985
 - Padma Bhushan in 1986
 - Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1977
 - Right Livelihood Award in 1984

(B) SUNITA BHAGAT

- She is from Oyena Village of Jharkand.
- In 2002, she started first Self Help group of Agriculture women in her village.
- She managed to get loan from this group and could provide some earning possibilities to the group.
- She worked with women nearby village and encouraged more and more women to form such Self- Help groups.
- She acted as a bridge between such groups and banks.
- She not only helped in disbussing the loan's but also acted positively in making the Self- Help groups to pay pack the loans.
- She has helped women from 15 villages in forming Self- Help groups.

(C) NAUROTI DEVI

- She was born in a poor Dalit family in village Harmada in Rajasthan.
- She was working as a stone cutter in near by quarry to earn livelihood.
- She never went to school but by Sheer determination she operated computer. She even teaches Government officers and the other Sarpanch how to make best use of computer in village administration.
- In 1981, active member of Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sanghtan in 1981.
- She has participated in movements and campaigns including the campaign for Right to Information.
- She refused to bow down the pressure from the dominant Jat community and contested and got elected as Sarpanch of her village.
- She resumed the land allocated for Government Health Center and got health center built on it.
- She has visited China, Germany and U.S.A and many other countries as part of various delegations.