

# ETHICS AND VALUES

**Volume-1, Semester-1**

## **WOMEN, SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND PRACTICES**

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# ETHICS AND VALUES

Volume-1, Semester-1

*For undergraduate (+3) CBCS-AECC course in the State of Odisha*

**Women, Social Institutions and Practices**

A course designed, prepared and prescribed by  
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## OBJECTIVES / LEARNING GOALS OF THE COURSE

- ◆ Development of a good human being and a responsible citizen.
- ◆ Developing a sense of right and wrong leading to ethically correct behavior.
- ◆ Inculcating a positive attitude and a healthy work culture.



## Preface

Men and women require an equal atmosphere to grow and unfold their potential. Both need to enjoy dignity and their human rights. Attaining equality between women and men and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women are the cherished values enshrined in the national agendas of each nation. It is realised now that values cannot be created nor practices are easy to be changed through law. They require the development of a new consciousness, a new desire and changed attitude, mindset and practices. This is the focus of this module.

In its attempt to bring out the common issues on women, the authors have tried to contextualise the discussions on the institutions like family, marriage, property, women in workspace, women in community and society and the common practices that are in vogue in these institutions and places and to what extent they are ethically sound and value gender justice, dignity of women and their enjoyment of human rights. These institutions and spaces are within the knowledge and practice of the everyday lives of our students, so that they can easily relate the discussions of the module to the actual situation they experience in different spheres of their lives. The elaborations are mostly situational depictions that try to bring out to the conscious notice of the students about the prevalent practices and propel the students to visualise the values involved in them right now, whether they need a change and if needed, how can they be changed. It also contains the success or path breaking stories of some women which will inspire our girls to think of a

better world where they themselves can lead the change. The book is just a guide to stir the student's thoughts and reason, to allow them to ponder over the issues and it tries to initiate them to spell out the desirable values which they can practise or motivate their surrounding members to practise to change the situation of the women around them whether their sisters, peers, co-workers, mothers or grandmothers. Their changed values and ethical responsibilities towards women can change the situation for women as a gender group and create a healthy society where both the gender groups will cooperate and complement each other to make life meaningful and fulfilling of themselves.

**The authors**

## Foreword

Introduction of a course on “Ethics and Values” in day to day activities at higher education institutions has been a long-standing wish of the State Government. Initiated during a number of brainstorming sessions of the Odisha State Higher Education Council (OSHEC) with esteemed academicians of the state, the idea was to demonstrate the concept of contemporary ethics and value system to our students through analysis of few selected examples of social, personal and professional conflicts that confront the youth in their daily lives. Since the course was visualised as a compulsory course for all disciplines, it was to be dealing with practical aspect of ethics and value systems applicable to day to day life and decisions. The ideas got crystallised through a number of lively discussion sessions with eminent academicians, Vice Chancellors of state universities, social workers engaged with vulnerable sections, administrators, thought leaders and many others. The sole objective was to develop an awareness and sensitivity in the students in relation to their interactions with the society at large and to empower them to distinguish good from evil, justice from injustice, fair practice from unfair practice as well as motivating them to internalise their duties, obligations and rights as responsible citizens.

This course addresses life issues and, hence, is one of the courses that requires a practical interface of theory and real-life situations. Therefore, this course has been prepared for the undergraduate curriculum as an ability enhancement compulsory module. The entire course is divided in to six modules (six credits) to be taught 1 module of 1 credit (15 classes) in each semester for all the streams and disciplines. Each module addresses a specific

social issue that has a great relevance to shaping ethics and values in young minds. Since, the books focussing on this approach to this topic are not available, eminent academicians and social workers are being requested to write books on these modules. This book is on the first module addressing issues of women in society and will be available in freely downloadable form at both OSHEC (<https://oshec.nic.in>) as well as <https://vtputkal.odisha.gov.in> sites. Simultaneously video lectures on these topics are being prepared to be made available as freely downloadable video lectures at the same sites.

Creating a course and content on the subject of ethics and values that will be simple and easily internalised by young students is truly a difficult task. The conceptualisation and support from Hon'ble Chairperson OSHEC, Principal Secretary Higher Education, all the esteemed Vice Chancellors of State Universities, eminent academicians who participated in the first brainstorming, representatives from various NGOs, the editorial group, all members of OSHEC and most importantly the authors who painstakingly gave words to the concept must be gratefully acknowledged.

As the world is increasingly tending towards materialistic consumerism, it is felt that schools, colleges and universities have a major responsibility in strengthening societal and individual values that would go a long way in creating a sustainable planet. It is hoped that this course will pave the first steps in the desired direction. The success of the course will critically depend on support from our faculty in higher education institutions. We humbly seek their cooperation.

**Asoka Kumar Das**

**Vice Chairperson OSHEC**



## **Introduction:**

### **Why study this course titled 'Ethics and Values'?**

To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.

(Theodore Roosevelt)

Education is only complete when it leads to all round development of the individual, which encompasses not only mental but also moral development. Moral education, which imbibes ethics and values in students, influences the social thinking of the individual and makes him/her distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. Moral education is a basic need for modern times where one is fast witnessing a degeneration of moral values. Moral education is important as it teaches diversity, tolerance, mutual respect and pluralistic values.

Moral values are values that express ideas about the good life. As such, concern for the moral virtues, such as honesty, responsibility, and respect for others, is the domain of moral education.

Since young people readily and unconsciously assimilate all types of influences, good or bad, it is important that society provides them with type of education that will make them acquire sound ethical and moral principles, and also develop appropriate attitudes and values that will help them to make good choices and decisions in their adulthood.

Moral education, then, refers to helping students acquire those virtues or moral habits that will help them individually live good lives and at the same time become productive, contributing members of their communities.

The system must be designed as such that the individual at a formative stage should distinguish to differentiate between what is good and what is bad.

There is need to encourage the youth to understand why people do one thing and not another. They should be able to make choices in order to become ethically mature adults. They should be assisted to learn how to take a position and consider facts relevant about a moral issue.

The socio- culture changes like transition from joint family to nuclear family system, dysfunctional families, excessive competition, parental expectations, commercialization of education, increased crime and violence, effect of media and information over-load, misuse of information technology, globalization, consumerism etc. are putting immense pressure on individuals, families and societies leading to distortion and degeneration of values.

Moral values direct us to the right path to lead our lives. Imparting these from the early days helps one to distinguish between right and wrong. These values involve factors like loving others, helping others, respecting others, morality, honesty etc.

**The benefits of 'Ethics and Values' Education are:**

- ◆ It helps one to distinguish between right and wrong.
- ◆ It gets reflects in one's personality; aiming at holistic development of a person.
- ◆ It makes the youth aware of eroding values and helps in wiping out bad influences in the society like violence, crimes, agitations, child abuse, disregarding women etc.
- ◆ It helps in building self- confidence, motivation and a positive approach to things; also helps in ensuring harmony and peace with self.
- ◆ It helps in finding out the true purpose of life and motivates one to be dedicated, unselfish, loving and caring for others.
- ◆ It leads to an education that connects heart, head and hand; thus improves the quality of education.
- ◆ It leads to an understanding of interdependence between family, society, nation and the world; helps in developing a pro-active social conscience amongst the youth and thus creates a balance between the youth and their community.

## SEMESTER-I

### Unit-1

#### **Title: - Issues Relating to Women**

**Total no. of Periods-15      Full mark-25      Credit point -1**

#### **1.0 Aims of the Unit:**

- ◆ The module aims to generate a sensitivity among the students towards women.
- ◆ Enable them to value the contributions of women, from family to the larger society.
- ◆ To generate among them a distinct urge to respect women
- ◆ To appreciate that women should have equal status and equal entitlements as member of the society.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

After going through the contents of the module and the classroom transactions on the contents, the students are expected to

- ◆ Have changes in their perceptions and practices towards women.
- ◆ Develop proper attitude towards women and value their work and contribution.
- ◆ Come forward to challenge the unethical treatments against women.
- ◆ End gender based hierarchy and hegemony, remove the feeling that women are counter to men and bring about a complementarity among the hitherto existing gender binary.

- ◆ Allow women to realize their self worth and contribute their best for betterment of the society.
- ◆ Pioneer in creating a gender equal society where the well being, happiness and security of the women will be well protected ; contributing towards a better and happier society.

### 1.1 Introduction:

General introduction on Ethics and Values, Gender equality as an essential precursor to social progress, the present scenario, Desirable gender related values.

### 1.2 Women and Family

Pre-natal sex selection, Gendered practices in the family, Gender based division of labour in the family, Marriage and women, Marriage and women's consent, Child marriage, Practice of dowry, Women and family violence.

### 1.3 Women and Work

Women's work: The Invisible hands, Exploitation of women at work, Gender Stereotyping at work, Glass ceiling, Women and pay gap, Sexual Harassment of women at work, Working women and role conflict.

### 1.4 Women, Community and Society

Violence against women in public spaces, Gender sensitive language and communication, Gendered language, Sexist Language, Gender neutral language, Women and property Rights, Women's property Rights in Indian Laws, The functionality of Women's Property Rights.



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## 1.0 Aims of the module and Expected Learning Outcomes

**Aims:** The aims of the module are two fold:

- The module aims to generate sensitivity among the students towards women, enable them to understand and value the contributions women make to society and to generate among them a distinct urge to respect women, recognise their unique identity and to understand their equal status and entitlements as members of society.
- Among girl students, it aims at removing certain ideas embedded in their minds and infusing in them a new spirit which would help them understand their identity, their equality with their complementary sex group, their rights and roles and would enable them to occupy a better position in family and community, workplace and society.

**Expected Learning Outcomes:** After going through the contents of the module and the class-room transactions relating to these, the students are expected to

- Change many of their established beliefs and behaviour towards women
- Realise the value of women's contribution to society and understand their worth
- Come forward to raise their voices against any bad treatment against women

- Try to create an environment in all spheres of life (public and private) where women will be treated as the equals of men and which will ensure their security and happiness.
- Instil in them the conviction that women and men are not antagonists, but complement each other and that each gender group needs the support and cooperation of the other
- Allow women to change their existing concept of self and realise their self-worth in the society
- Treat women with the respect they deserve, realise the responsibility they have for women, condemn, raise voice against and combat the practices which oppress women and seek to ensure their wellbeing and happiness.

### **1.1 Contextualisation of the Module:**

Men and women constitute society and contribute to its smooth functioning. The role women play in sustaining it is as important as that performed by men. So, they need to be treated as the equals of their male counterparts. Parity between men and women can help create a balanced society and ensure better development, growth and progress of society.

#### **1.1.1 Gender equality as an essential precursor to social progress:**

Social progress is achieved when a society meets the basic human needs of its citizens, allows the members to enhance and sustain the quality of their lives, and creates the conditions for all individuals to realise their full potential. But no society can



develop without improving the condition of women. Evidences show that societies with greater gender equality achieve higher levels of social and economic rights for all their members. To put it simply, gender equality impacts Human Development. Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi rightly said, “If you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate an entire family.” Making women equal in all spheres would bring qualitative change in society. It improves people's health, raises the nutritional standards of the family, reduces child mortality and ensures better educational outcomes for the next generation. Gender equality is intimately related to sustainable development and economic progress. Women can also play a significant role in the conservation of natural resources, and combating climate change. Once they acquire knowledge and training, food, water and energy crisis can be dealt with more effectively. Women contribute equally to the economy. Gender equality can successfully reduce poverty. So, in order to achieve social progress we should make sure that “No one is left behind”.

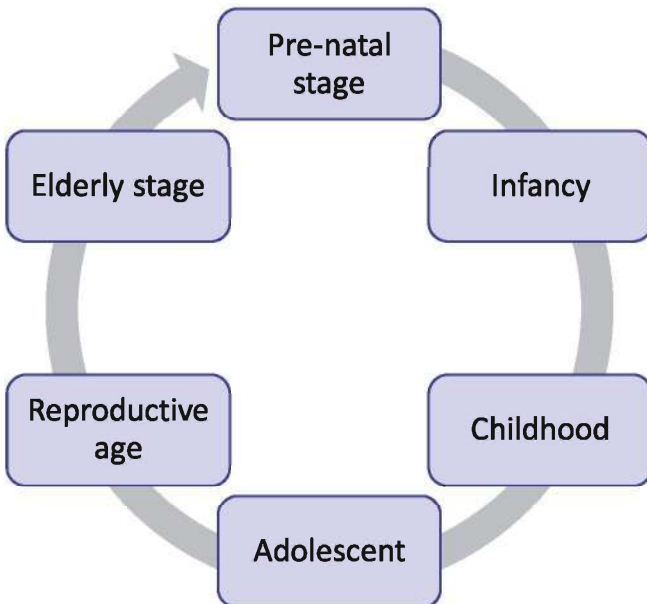
### **1.1.2 The present scenario**

Even now women throughout the world are still treated as unequal to men. But gender equality is vitally important for society. Realising this, social reformers tried to fight against many customary practices that undermined women's position in society. Developmental activists, the international community and national policy planners are trying to ensure equality to women in various spheres of life. Considerable progress has been made in this direction so far as education, access to health services and participation in the economy and polity are concerned. But this progress has not benefited all women. Still a major portion of the

women population and girls face inequality in their homes, communities, work places and in the larger society. They fail to enjoy their human rights and are denied privileges and opportunities available to men. They do not lead a life of dignity.

Women's position in society can be better understood through a “life cycle” approach. The” life cycle “approach simply means that a woman's lifespan comprises different stages. There are six definable stages through which every individual goes: the pre-natal stage, infancy, childhood, adolescence, reproductive age and old age. In each of these stages we find a few women enjoying some degree of equality with men. But biological differences between men and women make women lead a different type of life in each of these stages.

The chart below depicts the stages of life a woman passes through:



In each of these stages, it is noted that boys and girls, men and women lead different types of lives and their experiences become diverse. Customary practices, age-old beliefs, unequal power relations, social institutions like family, marriage, property do not treat men and women, boys and girls equally. Different set of rules, different attitudes and behaviour patterns on the basis of sex create gender inequality in society.

If we want to change these practices, let us take up this module and find ways to get rid of them. In this module, we are going to look into how many of our gender practices are against human values, morality and ethics and what we can do to eradicate them. Let us hope that a new wave of consciousness will shape a new generation of girls and boys in these class rooms, who will respect one another and work together to protect the rights of all people.

### **1.1.3 Desirable gender-related values**

In this module we will be talking about some desirable gender-related values like

- Gender Justice
- Gender equality
- Dignity of women
- Eradication of discrimination on the grounds of sex
- Respecting and honouring the human rights of women
- Recognising and appreciating the contributions of women
- Developing compassion, care and respect for women
- Social and economic inclusion of women

## 1.2 Women and Family

A girl passes through her entire lifecycle within the framework of a family. She is conceived in the mother's womb; she arrives in a family as a baby girl, spends her childhood in the family, attains her adulthood after adolescence, reaches reproductive age and finally grows old. As an adult, she performs different roles like those of a daughter, sister, wife, mother, and grandmother. In each of these stages, she has to make well-defined and definite contributions to her family. She undertakes different responsibilities in these roles. In discharging these responsibilities, she faces restrictions and risks which are heavier than those facing her male counterparts. In this sub-unit, we will bring under discussion the plight of women in the family as they perform different roles and explain what should be our ethical responsibilities towards them.

### 1.2.1 Pre-natal sex selection and women

Indian parents invariably have a son preference. Gradually, this mindset is changing with the spread of education, advocacies and campaigns promoted by the state and non-state actors. But this change is confined to the higher classes, educated families living in urban areas. Majority of the poverty-ridden families, who do not have education, awareness about the importance of girls and women in a society continue to believe that lineage is traced through males, a son is expected to perform certain last rites which daughters cannot, that a son (putra) saves his parents from the hell called “put”. As for the daughters, they are considered “parayadhan”(property belonging to others). In short, daughters

are treated as liabilities while sons are looked upon as assets. These beliefs compel parents to opt for prenatal sex selection. The detection of a female foetus leads parents to kill it in the mother's womb itself. This results in a declining sex ratio in society. The 2011 census shows that there are 940 females per 1000 males in our country. It is alarmingly low in some states and Union Territories like Haryana (877), Delhi (866), Chandigarh (818), Dadra Nagar Haveli (775), Daman and Diu (618). In our own state Odisha, the districts like Nayagarh (916) and Khordha(925), Anugul (942) and Dhenkanal (947) also have a low sex ratio.

Similarly, many girls are thrown on river banks, into wells or left on streets after birth. Such painful incidents take place during their infancy (i.e. Between 0 to 5 years of age). These are more common in northern states such as UP, Bihar, MP, and Rajasthan. It is also a gender-selective killing.

**A short movie of duration of 5minutes 29 seconds on Female Foeticide to be projected to the students for their understanding of the gravity of the issue.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uzp-4yHSVWw>

**PCPNDT is the Pre-conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994 passed by the Parliament of India to stop female foeticides and arrest the declining sex ratio in India. The act banned prenatal sex determination. This Act has undergone subsequent Amendments in 2003, 20013, 2018, 2019.**

Devan, a small village in Rajasthan, was famous for its Rajput population. Rajputs are usually warriors, but due to age-old beliefs, son preference and continuous practice of female foeticide, this village has become a place having almost no girls. A barat was last seen in the village some twenty years ago. There is no sister to tie a rakhi on the hands of the boys, no girls in the local girls' school, no colourful dresses, no festivals, no celebrations, and no companionship for grownup boys. The whole village looks colourless and young boys are frustrated. Lots of violent behaviour is witnessed inside families and boys are rejected as grooms in other villages. No one wants to get their daughters married into families which are known for their discriminating behaviour towards girls. Now boys from this village are going to far-away states and getting married there. They do not want to come back to their village or to their parents. All the old parents

Piplantri is a collection of six connected hamlets in Rajasthan. In 2007, the 17 year-old daughter of the local sarapanch Shyam Sundar Paliwal died. Paliwal's family planted a tree near the entrance of the village in her name. Soon, under his leadership other villagers began to follow his example. Now, every time a girl is born in Piplantri, villagers' plant 111 trees - an auspicious number for the local Hindus. The region now has more than 3,50,000 trees including mango, gooseberry, sandalwood, neem, peepal and bamboo, growing across the once barren lands and covering an estimated area of 1000 hectares. Along with this, parents of new born daughters also sign an affidavit saying that they won't marry off their daughters before they turn 18 and

are left in the village and receive no proper care and treatment when they fall ill. Members belonging to the older generation realise what a terrible mistake they committed by killing their girls before and after birth. The proud warriors today are left feeling utterly miserable.

will let them finish school. Villagers are also opening a fixed deposit account for each girl with Rs 31,000 that she can access once she reaches the age of 18, either for her education or for her wedding.

### Discussion

- ◆ A society needs both boys and girls. The entire future of a society rests upon the procreative capacity of its women. If we make girls disappear from a very early age, how can we imagine a future for our society?
- ◆ Many societies have come to face the acute problem of finding brides for young men with the number of women declining sharply.
- ◆ Many societies are gradually facing negative population growth and imbalanced work division without women.
- ◆ Mankind will perish without women.

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ Girls are an integral part of our society and society cannot survive without them.
- ◆ Their lives are as precious as those of boys.
- ◆ A girl has the right to life once she is conceived as a foetus in the mother's womb. We have no right to kill her, which amounts to a heinous crime.
- ◆ We need to protest against this practice and stop it to make the world a better place for both boys and girls and ensure the survival of mankind.

### 1.2.2 Gendered practices in the family :

Men and women together constitute a family. Both contribute to its functioning and development. Thus, in a family, men and women complement and supplement each other. But does this really happen in our families? Even today, in many families, a woman's identity is derived from that of her father, and the father is recognised as the so-called head of the family.

- ◆ Is it not a common practice noticed by all of us that when a child excels in any field, people ask who his/her father is and the child's identity is traced through his/her father?
- ◆ But if the mother has established her identity through a job she does or by excelling in some field, then only we say the child's identity is derived from that of the mother.
- ◆ When a field or house or any property's ownership is traced, it is again through a male person. Women who do not earn an income own hardly any property.

Sons and daughters are nature's gifts to families. But often they are treated unequally. In many households, sons are regarded as more valuable than daughters. Accordingly, their birth is celebrated with more pomp and their needs are given priority over those of daughter. This makes boys more privileged in comparison to girls. While a son is given better educational opportunities, given better nutrition and access to health facilities, a daughter's access to such facilities is severely restricted. These lay the foundation for gender-based discrimination.

Similarly, the socialisation process varies for children on the basis of their gender. A daughter is taught to display some typical



traits like submissiveness, shyness, and is required to be less demanding, more empathetic and accommodating while a boy is taught to be smart, aggressive, and demanding. Family members insist on girls getting used to doing household chores and taking up sibling care responsibilities from their very childhood. During adulthood, daughters face many restrictions. The world shrinks for them while it expands for boys. The freedom and autonomy of daughters are severely curtailed and sons are allowed to enjoy more freedom and autonomy.

No doubt, today, the scenario is changing. Girls are enrolled in larger numbers in schools and colleges. They excel academically. This has no doubt changed family attitudes towards girls' education. In the urban-based affluent families, equality of opportunity in education, health services are increasingly enjoyed by girls. But in the rural, poverty-stricken families, many girls fail to complete their school education. The higher becomes the level of education; the lower becomes the share of girls in rural areas. Even if they get enrolled in schools and colleges, parents send them to the educational institutions run by the government where investment is almost zero. The girls still bear the burden of doing chores at home, which affects their academic performance while boys are allowed to go to better educational institutions and are totally freed from household responsibilities. Thus, families do not provide equal opportunities to boys and girls. This is a gender discriminatory practice.

Women provide food and comfort to all in the family as wives and mothers. As wives, women seem to sacrifice their own comforts and happiness. They eat after everyone else in the family have eaten and eat whatever little is left. They are the prime care-

givers in families. They render services like cooking meals, collecting fuel, water, taking care of children, husbands, elderly members and pets. They spend sleepless nights to tend members of the family when they fall ill.

Gender practices of our families have unequal expectations from men and women. Men are not expected to do the household chores even when they have free time. But, women are expected to do all household chores. We take them for granted. We hardly care for their wishes, aspirations and needs. Below are some situations which can make you realise the plight of women in your families and think of some small changes that can bring a difference to their situation.

- ◆ There are four cakes and five members in a family. Who sacrifices her share? - It is always the wife and the mother.
- ◆ When, during a celebration, men enjoy themselves talking, sitting together, playing cards, where do you find the woman of the family? - She heads for the kitchen to feed everybody.
- ◆ Imagine the lunch and the dinner time. While every-

Just think what the following actions can do:

- ◆ Can we not cut the four cakes into five pieces and share them with our sisters, mothers and wives?
- ◆ During a celebration, if we can share the responsibilities, our mothers can also enjoy playing, singing and sitting with us.
- ◆ If we can help our mothers with the cooking, chopping vegetables,

one sits to enjoy hot meals, who is the hostess? - The mother running from the kitchen to the dining space serving each one with the delicious, steaming dishes.

- ◆ After dinner, everyone retires to bed. Who cleans the house? - Women do it and sleep late as if they never feel tired.
- ◆ In the family, who finds little time to rest when indisposed? - The woman.

serve food on plates and invite her to sit with us, it will be a pleasantly different experience.

- ◆ After dinner, if we can wash our own plates and share the cleaning work with her, together we can enjoy our sleep.
- ◆ Our mothers also need recreation, relaxation and rest in normal times and when they feel tired weak and sick.

Grandmothers are the eldest surviving support system of families. They are treasure houses of wisdom and experience. You might have enjoyed the warmth of their lap, the fascinating fairy and folk tales told by them and the unconditional love and sacrifice they lavished on you during your childhood. But when they age and grow infirm, they are left uncared for in many families. Their presence is not valued; their integration into family affairs is avoided. They feel neglected. At this stage of their lives, they are really in need of care and support. In exceptional cases, they are forced to work, and sometimes get verbally and physically abused. They are even thrown out of their houses. These traumatise them and society.

The teacher can show a short movie of 3 minutes 29 seconds duration about a real story of elder abuse. The link is----

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_5qpxfkTmcw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5qpxfkTmcw)

- ◆ Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 states that Children/grandchildren are under obligation to maintain his or her parents.
- ◆ The National Policy on Senior Citizens 2011 clearly states that elderly women need special attention.
- The elderly women bear the disproportionate burden of neglect.
- ◆ According to The State of Elderly in India Report (Help Age India), every second, an elderly person suffers abuse within the family.
- ◆ 04 in 10 testify to verbal abuse and one-third to disrespect. Many are forced to work through the day “worse than domestic servants,” and even their basic needs are ignored.

The status of women in the family becomes more deplorable when they become widows. When a woman loses her husband, she is referred to as a “widow”. Widowhood rituals are characterised by unbearable severity in India. They impose an oppressive life of denial on widowed women. A widow has to give up everything that beautifies her like bangles, bindis, sindoor, mangalsutras. She is often tabooed. Her very presence is treated as inauspicious. You might have seen widows treated in this manner in places where you live. She is also considered unlucky, and is therefore forbidden from participating in ceremonies thought to be auspicious, including weddings and child-naming ceremonies. Are these treatments not discriminatory? Do we treat a man who loses his

wife in the same way? Do we call him a “widower” and prevent him from participating in auspicious ceremonies?

- ◆ According to the United Nations, India is home to almost 55 million of the world's 258 million poor widows.
- ◆ The United Nations observes 23rd of June as the International Widows' Day.
- ◆ The Government of India introduced the widow pension scheme for providing financial support to the poor widows of India. Widows do have property rights.

Widows not only experience personal tragedies, but are subjected to social ostracization in the family, community and society. They are stigmatized. They are compelled to give up the things they love and cherish. They are required to give up colourful dresses and delicious food. They are not allowed to consume non-vegetarian dishes cooked with spices, garlic and onion. They are thrown out of their families. They are often forced to shave their heads. Thus, instead of leading a life of their choice, they lead one full of compulsions.

### Discussion

- ◆ Do the sons and daughters enjoy the same privileges and opportunities in the families in your surroundings?
- ◆ Who is your first teacher in your family?
- ◆ Do you feel your mothers to be overburdened with household work?

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ Both boys and girls create a balanced society and therefore their birth into the family is a need. Both are human beings, have dreams and aspirations and both should enjoy their human rights which include right to life, education, health, nutrition and recreation. Differentiating between them needs to be avoided.

- ◆ Can you describe the daily routine of your mothers?
- ◆ How much leisure do your mothers enjoy and how much care they receive from the members for whom they work day in and day out?
- ◆ Don't you know old age is a biological stage which each one of us will go through?
- ◆ Don't you feel we need to care the elderly and the grandma particularly?
- ◆ Suggest what you can do to keep your grandma's life happy.
- ◆ Don't you feel that the life of widows in our society is one of acute discrimination and deprivation?
- ◆ Is it human to treat widows badly, to stigmatise them?
- ◆ Are we not discriminating between a widow and a widower?
- ◆ Both father and mother jointly own children and household properties. Mothers' role as procreator and early educators of children and in creating wealth for the family need to be recognised.
- ◆ We need to repay our debts to our grandmothers by keeping them happy through our care and gentle and loving behaviour. We need to spend quality time with them. Our respect and heartfelt appreciation for what we have received from them, listening to their advice and our efforts to associate them with our daily lives will make them realise their worth.
- ◆ We need to realise that widows are human beings. They need sympathy and empathy after they undergo a terrible personal loss. Their rights need to be protected in the family. Stigmas imposed on the widows by orthodox rituals deprive them of their basic human rights. They need to be given the benefits of social justice, social security and treated with dignity.

### 1.2.3 Gender-based division of labour in the family

In a household or a family, men and women both work. But they do not do the work as they like. They do the work they are allotted to do on the basis of their gender. This sex-based allotment of work is called gender division of labour. Gender division of labour is based neither on capacity nor on rationality, but on age-old practices and belief systems. When we claim that our society has advanced, that women have occupied several public spaces, that they are visible in almost all important fields like Board Rooms, space missions, and that they have emerged as political leaders in this country at village and the national levels (Palli to Parliament), let us ask ourselves if the gender division of labour in the family has been affected by these success stories?

In real life, the number of women joining the employment market has gone up. A large number of women have joined the workforce. But it has not relieved them from domestic work. They are now “doubly burdened”. The situation of women doing white collar jobs is different from that of women who earn their daily wage. Millions of women struggle to perform their domestic chores while doing work outside home. This places a heavy burden on them.

Women's work at home is invisible. Shockingly, only paid or remunerated activities are defined as work. A woman who does the bulk of the work in the family is never paid. So, her contributions are never considered as work. Her economic contributions to the maintenance and development of the family and its members go unrecognised. Care has long been considered to be the 'natural' responsibility of women. Women's work within families is variously known as “domestic work”, “reproductive labour”, “care

work” and “emotional labour”. These works remain invisible, are under-recognized, undervalued and unremunerated. It is not taken into account in the National GDP Account or the census enumeration of work.

Thus, there are many areas of human activity which are excluded from economic measurement. The unpaid services include household maintenance, subsistence agriculture, voluntary work, family sustenance activities and reproductive work. All these are undertaken by women. A simple example given below can explain the difference between visible and invisible work:

The teacher here can also cite the example of recognized productive and unrecognized productive work of “pickle making”. All over India, women at home make different kinds of pickle, which is a side dish and for some it becomes a principal dish. When this pickle is made by women as part of a cottage industry or S.H.G. endeavor and sold in the market, it acquires an economic value. Here the work becomes paid work. On the other hand, the pickle made by womenfolk for home consumption becomes a regular consumption item without monetary value and is unpaid, unrecognized and invisible.

**As per the U.N. Report, 2020**

- ◆ On an average day, women globally spend about three times more hours on unpaid domestic and care work than men. This includes cooking, cleaning, fetching water and firewood and other non- market essential daily tasks within households. These works go unpaid.



- ◆ In some countries, women end up spending 11 times more time than men on such tasks.
- ◆ When someone says 'She is a working woman', we understand that she is doing some paid job. The reality is that all women are working. Repeatedly, we hear that 'my wife does nothing or my mother is a housewife'.
- ◆ 'Housewife' is a degrading term. We know that no house needs a wife. Women are actually doing the job of managing the affairs of households, they are home makers and managers.
- ◆ A short movie of 2 minutes and 30 seconds on the invisible work of women can be shown to students in the class.

<https://youtu.be/RTKtvp0-2wI>

### Discussion

- ◆ Is there really a difference in men and women's capacities to perform household chores like cleaning, cooking, fetching water, caring for the sick, the aged and children or are such differences invented by our society?
- ◆ When the time devoted is longer, the physical exertion, emotional involvement are too heavy, why then women's work

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ Traditional mindsets relating to care functions within the home for women and doing a remunerative job outside its confines for men have no basis in reality and are unfair.
- ◆ Except procreation, all tasks can be per-

is unrecognised and underestimated?

- ◆ Don't you feel we exploit our women by not acknowledging their work and treating them as non-workers?
- ◆ Don't you feel women's invisible work eases our lives at home and outside?
- ◆ Is it not true that their sacrifice saves our money and labour?
- ◆ Don't you think that women's work needs to be shared to allow them opportunities for taking up activities outside home?
- ◆ Can't the financial and household loads be shared between men and women in a family? Is it a great job to accomplish this ?

formed by boys and girls alike.

- ◆ Boys need to take pride in doing the chores women perform and vice versa.
- ◆ Jobs can be shared in a family by everyone in the family and training needs to be imparted to children from early childhood.
- ◆ Women's work at home needs to be acknowledged and appreciated.

#### 1.2.4 Marriage and Women:

Marriage plays a significant role in establishing families. In India, marriages are life-changing events for girls and women. Due to marriage they have to change their living place, their life styles, are expected to learn a lot of new social duties and they get into a new family. Marriages are given much importance in Hindu religious scriptures. As per religious prescriptions, men cannot

observe any religious rite alone. They can take part in panchamahayagnas only when they are married and are accompanied by their wives. Thus, marriage confers a special status on both men and women. But many times, women face problems after marriage. Very often, they become silent sufferers. They opt for a “culture of silence” while the partner's family opts for a “culture of violence”. Why does this happen?

- ◆ It is because, the institution of marriage always treats a woman as subsidiary to man.
- ◆ Early marriage creates problems for women.
- ◆ A woman's choice and consent hardly play any role in a marriage.
- ◆ The man and his family have an upper hand in a marriage.
- ◆ The girl is often regarded as a marketable commodity in a marriage.
- ◆ Very often she is treated as a consumable item.
- ◆ Heavy dowry is demanded from the groom's side.
- ◆ A woman is undervalued in marriage negotiations. Her competence, capacity and worth are never taken into consideration.

In this sub-section, we can discuss issues of women's consent, child marriage and the practice of dowry.

#### **1.2.4.1 Marriage and Women's Consent:**

Marriage consists in a tie between a man and a woman. Here, consent needs to be obtained from both of them. Consent is a form of agreeing to the tie. Our epics suggest that Draupadi and Sita had given their consent for their marriage through a system called “swayambar” and enjoyed the freedom to choose a partner of their choice. Today this is called 'consent' in legal parlance. So far as the issue of consent is concerned, families give less weightage to the

consent of girls. However, today, only the educated, employed urban-based girls are able to assert their right to consent in a marriage whereas many girls who are uneducated and get married in their childhood fail to exercise this right to consent.

Article 16 (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.” The opposite of marriage by consent is forced marriage. Forced marriage is organised to safeguard family honour, to retain ancestral land, property, and wealth, to give daughters in marriage in the interest of family prestige and community prestige and avoid social stigmatization. It also takes place due to poverty and indebtedness which drive parents to coerce their children into marriage in return for dowry. Forced marriages take place when a girl is in her childhood or adulthood stage. According to figures released by the UK Home Office, in 2017, India was among the top four countries as far as forced marriages were concerned. In 2019, out of all the cases handled by the Forced Marriage Unit, UK, from around the world, 80% of the forced marriage victims were women. Thus,

- ◆ The right to consent before marriage signifies the freedom of personhood provided to adult persons to freely choose their life partners.
- ◆ Men and women enjoy equal privileges in Islam. The Holy Quran says the Allah (SWT) forbids a Muslim man to take a woman as his wife without her consent. Marriage is invalid (haram) without the consent of woman in Islam.
- ◆ In India, marriages are often forced or negotiated by parents. Here, a girl's choice and consent have no place.

- ◆ Traditionally, marriage in India is regarded as a union of two families rather than that of two individuals regarded as equals. So, it takes the form of an arrangement-based marriage.
- ◆ In an arranged marriage, a marital union is established between a man and a woman where family members play a significant role in deciding the marriage and its terms and conditions. The woman's free will in choosing her partner has no role here.
- ◆ Many girls fall prey to marriages without consent as they marry before attaining marriageable age. This is called child marriage. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA) and Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 try to prevent forced marriages. The PWDVA recognises forced marriage as a form of domestic violence.
- ◆ The Delhi High Court declared that the right to choose one's life partner is a fundamental.

Even if the right to choose one's own partner is recognised by the court as a fundamental right, many killings take place when a girl chooses to marry someone of her own choice. This is known as honour killing. This happens under the pretext of protecting the honour of the family and its reputation and status. Parents often think that, if a girl, in marrying someone, violates the norms of their caste, community or culture, it brings dishonour to the family, she deserves to be killed. This practice is rampant in states like Punjab and Haryana. Article 19 and Article 21 of the Indian Constitution spell out the Right to Freedom and the Right to Life respectively. In the case of honour killing, both these fundamental rights of a person are violated.

### Discussion

- ◆ Who are the ultimate victims of marriage without consent?
- ◆ Don't you think that marriage without consent is illegal?
- ◆ Please give your ideas about how this affects the lives of girls? (physically, emotionally, socially and economically)
- ◆ Please suggest how the freedom of expression and choice of a girl and her right to be treated as equal with a boy and will be equally upheld in a marriage.
- ◆ Please think about caste, community and cultural norms on the one hand and mutual love and affection, on the other. Which should be given precedence?

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ Freedom in choosing one's partner and consent before marriage are essential for boys and girls alike.
- ◆ Consent of both boys and girls need to prevail over caste, community and cultural norms.
- ◆ Consent before marriage can contribute to making a union stronger and lasting.

#### 1.2.4.2 Child Marriage:

Child marriage is a common practice in many South Asian countries. Girls are most vulnerable to this practice. It refers to giving in marriage a girl before she attains the age of 18. Gender inequality, poverty, social norms and insecurity promote the practice of child marriage. At many places in India and worldwide, girls are marrying at a very tender age. Child marriage violates children's rights to education and health and exposes them to high

risks of violence, exploitation, and abuse. It generates poverty and gender inequality. Child marriage affects both girls and boys, but it affects girls disproportionately.

This is a form of forced marriage without the consent of the girl. In some countries, girls as young as 7 or 8 are forced by their families to marry men much older than them. Parents prefer to get their daughters married early due to poverty, customary practices and to ensure protection of their daughters from sexual assaults. But they forget and fail to understand that child marriage itself exposes girls to sexual exploitation.

Government legislations, campaigns and public awareness along with the education of the girls have led to a decline in the number of child marriages in the country. But it has not yet been fully stopped. In many areas, especially in tribal and rural pockets, it is a continuing phenomenon.

- ◆ According to a United Nations report, India records the second highest number of child marriages.
- ◆ The UNICEF Report 2019 states that India is a home to 2.23 million child brides. This is one third of the global total.
- ◆ Over 47% of minor girls in India get married before the age of 18.
- ◆ 7 percent i.e. 102 million girls marry before the age of 15.
- ◆ Each year, at least 1.5 million girls under 18 get married in India.
- ◆ The states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh are the frontline states in housing the child brides.

- ◆ For the first time, the British Government had passed the Child Marriage Restraint Act in 1929 to prevent child marriage in India. It was also known as the Sarada Act.
- ◆ Child marriage has been declared illegal according to the provisions of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006. This act is meant to prohibit child marriages rather than merely restrict them.
- ◆ Under this law, children have the choice to declare their marriage void within two years of reaching adulthood.
- ◆ The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 imposes a fine of \$1,535 and two years' imprisonment on parents for marrying off their underage children.
- ◆ A National Action Plan to prevent underage marriages was drafted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2013. This Action Plan focuses on “law enforcement, changing mind-sets and social norms, empowering adolescents, quality education and sharing knowledge.”
- ◆ A report prepared by the Law Commission in 2017 recommends making marriage registration compulsory to prevent forced and early marriages.

Irrespective of such laws, action plans, child marriage is still rampant in our country. Customary practices supersede legal provisions prohibiting it. This becomes vividly clear from the following practice:



Akshyaya Tritiya or Akha Teej is celebrated on the third day of shuklapakhya( bright fortnight) of Vaisakha when both the sun and the moon are at their extreme points. This occasion is considered very auspicious for marriages and over the years mass child marriages, particularly in the state of Madhya Pradesh, came to be held on this day. The massive effort of the district administration to prevent these marriages has till date failed to achieve spectacular success. People of the state blindly support and practise this custom thus undermining the laws and their implementation.

The movie having a duration of 3 minutes5 seconds with the link <https://youtu.be/E1SFz-AXyDg> may be shown in the class.

### **Payal- A Hopeful Story**

Payal, a girl from Rajasthan was just 11 years old when she took the decisive step of fighting against her family members who were forcing her to discontinue her school education and get married. She was part of Kailash Satyarthi's Children's Foundation Bal Mitra Gram which encouraged children to take democratic action to bring about positive change in their lives and in the lives of the entire community. As the second Bal Pradhan (Child President/Chief), she realized the need to set a positive example for other children in her village, Hinsla in Rajasthan's Alwar District. It was a long and arduous journey but her persistence paid off. Her family finally called off her marriage and she could continue her education. Inspired by the change she could bring about in her own family, she decided to mobilize other children to end the age-old tradition of child marriage in her village. She could also stop her sister's marriage and continued her fight against child marriage and 'Ghunghat

Pratha'. It took a year to bring about the change and the village women joined her to speak out and voice their opinions.

In 2013, Payal was chosen as the jury member for the 'World's Children's Prize' for her work in Hinsla. She was also awarded the 'Sawdhan India Samman' instituted by Life Ok channel to award real life heroes who have helped create a safer society by fighting against such crimes in 2016 and 'Young Achiever Award' by global sports and fitness brand Reebok in 2017. On September 25, 2019, Payal received the 'Goalkeepers Global Goals Changemaker Award' by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation when she was just 17. Now Hinsla is known as a child marriage free village.

Why can't we be like Payal?

### Discussion

- ◆ The students can be given group tasks to stage innovative street plays to create public awareness against child marriage.
- ◆ Students may be asked to prepare slogans against child marriage.
- ◆ Don't you think that child marriage is a gross violation of child rights?
- ◆ Don't you feel that giving girls in marriage and getting married to girl children is bad?

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ Like boys, girls, too, have dreams and aspirations. We should not impede their journey towards fulfilling their aspirations by forcing them into early marriage.
- ◆ Instead of getting them married at an early age, we need to safeguard their human rights by giving them opportunities.
- ◆ This will reduce inequality, poverty, violence

- ◆ Don't you think girl child marriage is forced marriage?
- ◆ Does this not amount to shunning responsibility on the parts of the parents?

and a lot of social evils oppressing them and create a gender equal world.

### 1.2.4.3 The Practice of Dowry

Dowry is a practice associated with marriage of girls. It refers to the property or valuable security given or agreed to be given to the groom or his family either directly or indirectly. It is a payment made by a woman to her husband's family upon marriage. It can take the form of money, property, or estate. The amount depends on several factors like region, religion, caste, the groom's education, the bride's skin tone, and the negotiation skills of both the families. Families' preparations for giving the groom a dowry start with the birth of a baby girl and continue until she gets married.

With the increasing access of women to education, employment, participation in public life, young girls are today raising their voices against dowry. Irrespective of their protest against the process, dowry-related cruelty, dowry-related exploitation and dowry deaths continue to take place in our society. The practice of giving gifts to girls at the time of their marriage by their parents has taken the ugly form of dowry today with demands made by grooms' families and dowry has emerged as an inescapable feature of marriages in our time. Just look at the new forms it has assumed:

### Dowry: Past and Present

- ◆ In olden days, dowry was given to newly weds from the girl's family to help them start a new life.
- ◆ It fulfilled the everyday needs of the newly wed.
- ◆ It was a gift given willingly by the bride's parents and its nature was decided by her parents.
- ◆ As daughters did not inherit their parents' property, parents sought to make a 'one time' gift to the girls' at the time of the wedding.
- ◆ The best part was that it was given taking into account the capacity and willingness of the bride's family.
- ◆ Dowry in the past was looked upon as "streedhan" and was viewed as a safety net for the girls.
- ◆ Today, both giving and getting dowry, have become a mark of status.
- ◆ Today it is not limited to satisfying one's needs, but is meant to fulfil the greed of the groom and his family.
- ◆ Dowry today is decided by the groom's side. It is negotiated through bargains without considering the financial condition of the bride's family.
- ◆ Even after the inheritance rights are given to girls and girls have become economically empowered, dowry continues to be demanded and given.
- ◆ Unfortunately, the bride's family gives dowry under compulsion even when it cannot afford to do so.
- ◆ Dowry today functions as "purushadhan" to which the groom feels to be absolutely entitled.

Traditions, low level of education of girls, lack of economic self-sufficiency among girls, the greed of the groom and his family members and dowry perceived as a status symbol continue to perpetuate the practice of dowry. The impact of dowry on women, families and society is far-reaching. The dowry system creates gender inequality, promotes corruption, places a heavy economic burden on the bride's family. It affects the lives of women in multiple ways. It leads to female infanticide, loss of self-respect in women and diminishes their status. They are abused and harassed.

Dowry contributes to the phenomenon of child marriage in significant ways. The amount paid as dowry by the bride's family to the groom's family increases as the girl grows older and gets more educated. This compels parents to take children out of school and marry them off at an early age to avoid having to pay a higher amount of dowry. Reports suggest that dowry-related violence kills over 20 women on a daily basis across the country. The inability of the bride's family to pay dowry results in a married woman being tortured. This happens more often when she is a young girl. Such torture violates her human rights.

The reverse is the practice under Muslim law. Mahr and Dower are given in Islamic tradition. These are different from dowry as these are given by the groom to the bride. Mahr or Meher is the obligation, in the form of money or possessions paid by the groom, to the bride at the time of marriage in Islamic traditions. While the mahr is often given in the form of money, it can also be anything such as jewellery, home goods, furniture or land. Mahr is typically specified in the marriage contract signed at the time of a wedding as Islamic marriages are contractual.

Dower is the payment from the husband or his family to the wife, especially to support her in the event of the death of the husband. Under Islamic law, the wife also acquires inheritance

rights. However, mahr is distinct from dower in two ways:

- ◆ Firstly, mahr is legally required for all Islamic marriages while dower is optional.
- ◆ Secondly, mahr is required to be specified at the time of marriage (when a certain amount is promised, if not paid immediately), while dower is not paid until the death of the husband.

Mahr can also be classified as a form of "bridewealth", described by anthropologists as payments made from the kin of the groom to the kin of the bride; however, mahr is paid directly to the bride and not to her parents. In fact, as her legal property, mahr establishes the bride's financial independence from her parents and in many cases from her husband, who has no legal claims to his wife's mahr.

**Do you know dowry is a punishable offense and a criminal act in India?**

- ◆ The Dowry Prohibition Act came into force on 1st July 1961. It was passed with the purpose of prohibiting the demanding, giving and taking of dowry.
- ◆ The Dowry Prohibition Act clearly stipulates that a person who gives or takes or helps in the giving or taking of dowry can be sentenced to jail for 5 years and fined Rs. 15, 000/- or the amount of the value of dowry, whichever is more.
- ◆ In 1980, the Government set up a committee which recommended amendments in the Dowry Prohibition Act.
- ◆ An amendment to the law in 1986 mandated that any death or violence within the first seven years of marriage would be tried as a crime related to dowry.
- ◆ This Act empowers State governments to appoint Dowry Prohibition Officers, who not only have a preventive role but also have powers to collect evidence against people who take dowry.

Irrespective of such laws, dowry continues to be a chronic feature of Indian marriages bringing enormous problems for parents of the bride and the bride herself. It violates the sanctity of the institution of marriage.

Two video clippings of the durations of 2 minutes and 41 seconds and 4 minutes 44 seconds may be shown to the students in the class.

<https://youtu.be/t8O9qvckvxY>

<https://youtu.be/VFsa6Iz1nQg>

### Discussion

- ◆ Don't you feel marriage which is a sacred institution is being reduced to a business deal due to dowry?
- ◆ Doesn't the practice devalue women and overvalue men?
- ◆ Don't you think that men should protest against being sold?
- ◆ Doesn't it curb the right and freedom of young men to have a free choice in selecting their own life partners?

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ In a marriage men and women play the role of equal partners. But dowry degrades the institution of marriage and devalues women.
- ◆ Mahatma Gandhi rightly said, "Any young man, who makes dowry a condition for marriage, discredits his education and his country and dishonours womanhood".

### 1.2.5 Women and Family Violence

Families are nurturing and need-fulfilling places for children and adults. It is expected that members enjoy maximum safety and security within the four walls of their houses. But many a time children encounter violence within their families. Violence pollutes the family environment. It prevents the family from performing its functions for the members. Violence within the family environment has a negative impact on children. Further, it erodes victims' trust in and dependence on families as a source of security. It is often seen that girls and women become victims of violence at home. This brings discriminations and often violates their human rights. Violence against women clearly indicates that women are treated as powerless and less valuable in families whereas men are treated as powerful and more valuable. Violence within the family environment has a harmful impact on children. Violence faced by girls and women take many subtle forms. They are briefly discussed below.

#### **Dowry death:**

As we have discussed earlier, marriage is a sacred institution in Indian society. Here a woman is welcomed into the life of a man to build a family and to perform the social functions of procreation and the religious tasks of yajnas. But this is now followed by the ugly practice of dowry. Dowry reflects the greed of the groom's parents and the groom, who extract cash or gifts from the bride's family. When this greed is not satisfied, the newly married woman becomes a victim of dowry torture, and may end up being murdered.

Dowry deaths are deaths of married women who are murdered or driven to suicide by continuous harassment and



torture by their husbands and in-laws over a dispute about their dowry. Section 304B of the Indian Penal Code defines Dowry death as the death of a woman caused by burns or bodily injury or which occurs otherwise than under normal circumstances within seven years of her marriage. Dowry deaths are on the rise in the country. In 2019 alone, 7,115 cases of dowry deaths were registered under Section 304-B of the Indian Penal Code.

### **Honour killing**

Honour killing is the murder of an individual, either by an outsider or a member of a family. Most often, it involves the murder of a woman or girl by male family members, who act on the belief that the victim has brought dishonour or shame upon the family. There are various motives behind honour killing such as love marriage, inter-caste marriage, homosexuality, divorce, disobeying elders, arguing with elders, choice of clothes, roaming with people, staying away from home till late at night.

Surprisingly, when a male child or member does anything that affects the honour of the family, he is not murdered in the name of honour. This practice of killing girls in the name of honour is a clear reflection of gender bias.

In some states, governments have taken steps to safeguard girls and women from honour killing.

- ◆ The Kerala government launched in December 2019 a service to manage safe houses in each district for inter-faith and inter-religious couples, aiming to avoid honour killings.
- ◆ There are safe houses for couples fearing honour-based violence in Haryana in the districts of Rohtak, Hisar and Karnal.

### **Femicide:**

Femicide is the killing of a woman or girl, in particular by a man on account of her gender. Most cases of femicide are committed by partners or ex-partners. It involves ongoing abuse at home, threats, sexual violence or situations where women have less power or fewer resources than their partner to protect themselves. The reverse hardly takes place.

### **Domestic Violence:**

One of the most heinous crimes against women is the violence that they experience at home. In most cases, it is committed by their intimate partners. Domestic violence is manifested in many forms such as sexual, physical or psychological. Research has established that there exists a direct and significant correlation between a country's level of gender equality and rates of domestic violence. Countries with less gender equality experience higher rates of domestic violence. Domestic violence goes mostly unreported or underreported.

- ◆ In 1993, The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defined domestic violence as: Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation.
- ◆ Domestic violence increases in times of crisis. During the pandemic, it has seen an all-time increase worldwide. The National Commission of Women reports that, during the first phase of lockdown due to covid 19 in 2020, i.e. from March 25th to March 31st, the NCW got 1477 complaints of domestic violence which was an all-time high. When for thousands of women their own homes became most unsafe place the call, 'Stay home, stay safe' appeared strangely ironic.

### **Child Marriages/Forced Marriages:**

Child marriages have been described previously in this chapter. Forced marriage means forcing a girl to get married without her consent. Forced marriage is a marriage in which one and/or both parties have not personally expressed their full and free consent to the union. A child marriage is considered to be a form of forced marriage. In India, forced marriages are illegal under Article 15 of the Indian Contract Act 1872. It is a violation of human rights. The Indian Constitution grants right to liberty and choices of living life to all under Article 21.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):**

Female Genital Mutilation is a global practice. It is practised in about thirty countries of the world. It is usually practised in India by some Islamic groups. The procedure is generally performed when a girl is seven years old and involves the total or partial removal of the clitoral hood. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is also known as khatna or khafz in the Muslim Bohra community. The United Nations has declared female genital mutilation as a human rights violation.

### **Forced sterilisation:**

Forced sterilization occurs when a woman is sterilised after expressly refusing to undergo the procedure, without her knowledge or when she is not provided an opportunity to give her consent. Forced sterilization takes place in large numbers across countries. It was very prominent during the World War II. In Nazi Germany, 400,000 men and women were forcibly sterilized. In Sweden, 63,000 people, mostly women, were sterilized. It is a barbaric practice affecting the health of women in large measures. It takes place against the choice and decision of the women and it does not honour the reproductive rights of the women.

### **Forced nudity:**

Forced nudity is a state of undress that is imposed on an individual. This is a form of violence often perpetrated against women. It may occur when a woman's clothes are manually removed from her body by other people or when a woman is ordered to take off her clothes. Forced nudity can refer to both partial and total nudity. This also happens in public spaces.

A woman encounters nudity consciously and unconsciously.

- ◆ Many times, partners and boyfriends forcefully strip girls, take their pictures and make these go viral as porn videos.
- ◆ Cases of woman being forced to become nude and made to walk in the village streets have been recorded.
- ◆ In public spaces like malls, cases of pictures of women undressing inside trial rooms taken by cameras fitted there, which are sold at high prices have been reported. This is done without the knowledge of women. This is a crime against women.

### **Marital rape**

Marital rape involves sexual intercourse with a wife by her husband without her consent. Marital rape is considered a form of domestic violence and abuse. This form of rape is more widely experienced by women. Marital rape is often a chronic form of violence for the victim, which takes place within the sphere of intimate relations. Women in India do face frequent incidents of discrimination and violence in the household and marital rape is most common across age, caste and class.

- ◆ Penal consequences have been provided to ensure the safety of women. But no law explicitly prohibits a man from raping his legally wedded wife.
- ◆ Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 spells out that any form of sexual intercourse or sexual act committed by a man with his own wife is prohibited if the wife happens to be under 15 years of age.
- ◆ Similarly, 376B of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 pronounces that any form of sexual intercourse by the husband with his wife during a period of separation is illegal.

A short video clipping of 4 minutes 25 seconds duration on marital rape can be showed in the class. The link is <https://youtu.be/YD3toWpUe8M>.

### Discussion

- ◆ Don't you think inflicting violence on women is an expression of gender discrimination in the family and an indicator of unequal power relations?
- ◆ When a family comprises men and women, boys and girls, why do women become the frequent victims of violence?
- ◆ Doesn't violence undermine the status of women in the family and keep them at the mercy of men?

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ A violence-free family environment creates a good family where children grow up in a culture of tolerance, trust, care, a sense of honour and respect for the members living with them

### 1.3 Women and Work

Today, we find many women at work. Women work as agricultural labourers, as nurses, doctors, engineers, teachers, bankers, scientists, pilots, policewomen, administrators, business leaders and entrepreneurs. But this is not the story of every woman of the country or even the world. Participation in paid jobs is called employment. The share of women is not the same as men in the employment market.

Men and women do not participate equally in the labour market. Around the world, only 47 per cent women of working age participate in the labour market, compared to around 74 per cent men as per the report of the United Nations. The commonly held idea that women are meant for chulha-chowka (household work), deep-rooted customs, traditions, discriminatory practices, burdens of the care economy prevent women from acquiring the skills and training they need to enter the labour market. Gender discriminations leading to lower education, fewer health and nutrition opportunities from a very young age deter women from contributing to the employment market. Till date, higher education in competitive fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is a male bastion and the presence of women is negligible. Further, employment opportunities are not available equally in rural and urban areas. In rural areas, these are not many opportunities for employment. So, a majority of women living in rural areas are engaged in household economic activities (in their own agricultural field, in their own handloom or handicraft units) for which they are not remunerated. Moreover, their care burden makes it difficult for them to migrate and to seek a job in the urban labour market. Even in many of the government flagship employment schemes their share is not the same as that of men.

The freedom to work by choice, with dignity in an environment which ensures their safety and gives them a fair deal still does not exist for millions of women. The majority of women are engaged in low-quality jobs under conditions which render them vulnerable. They are paid less in comparison to their male counterparts. Women find themselves discriminated against when it comes to getting their preferred jobs, the conditions under which they work and the remuneration they receive for doing their jobs. The situation of women is more miserable in India. The labour market in the country is biased in favour of men.

Women face safety issues at the work place. Many times, they do not get a congenial working environment. Their job is not secure, and they face disparity in wages. They encounter discriminations by their employers and male colleagues. Most significantly, carrying the dual burdens of work and family makes life extremely difficult for them.

- ◆ The recent World Bank Group report (2020) states that women account for only 19.9 percent of the labour force in India. Around 80 % of women in the country do not get an opportunity to join the employment market.
- ◆ According to the Gender Gap Index in 2020, India ranks 149th in economic participation and opportunity it offers to women.
- ◆ It ranks 117th in wage equality for similar work.
- ◆ 60 per cent of women in India in the productive age-group(15-59 years) are engaged in full-time housework.
- ◆ As per the records of the Government, 15.4 million women have lost their jobs during the pandemic.

### Discussion

- ◆ Do you feel that there is a real difference in skills, physical and mental abilities between men and women?
- ◆ If not, why do we prevent women from securing employment?
- ◆ Does this attitude result from our bias?
- ◆ Is it not curtailing women's right to work, restricting their choices and undermining their dignity in society?
- ◆ Are we not preventing women from contributing to society through such discrimination?

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ There are no natural differences in the productive ability of women and men. It is artificially created by us.
- ◆ We have to change our mindset while employing women and create a suitable work environment for them.
- ◆ We need to recognise women's ability and honour their right to work, their choices and safeguard their dignity in society.

### 1.3.1 Women's Work: The Invisible Hand

Women do a lot of work. In almost all countries they play a vitally important role in the production process. They contribute significantly to dairy production, to agricultural production, livestock management and are crucial to the food chain supply. They also contribute immensely to the handloom and handicraft sectors. But their contribution goes unrecognised because their



labour is unpaid. This unpaid work undertaken by women renders their contribution invisible in the work scenario. In reality, women spend considerably more time than men doing unpaid work.

Unpaid work of women not only makes their hands invisible, but also raises the issue of their dignity. The dignity of their labour goes unrecognised. Unpaid work also throws gender inequality in family, community and society into sharp relief. The male is celebrated as the breadwinner and women are presented as home-makers, mother and dependent. They are undervalued in the family, community and the market, despite the benefits they confers on all these institutions. This creates a gender hierarchy where man is considered superior to woman.

Similarly, women in home-based industries like coir, agarwati production, pickle making, papad making are paid little and are not given much importance though they supply so many useful goods to the market. Unsurprisingly, national work enumeration does not include them.

SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association), a national trade union was registered in 1972. This was established by Ela R. Bhatt in Ahmedabad, Gujrat to give identity, recognition and social protection to the poor, self-employed women workers whose contributions remain hidden. SEWA tries to secure economic, social, and legal rights for women workers. It operates in 17 states of India.

### **1.3.2 Exploitation of Women at Work**

Over the years, sincere efforts have been undertaken by national governments to bring more and more women into the workforce. Many progressive laws and programmes have been

introduced to encourage women to join it and to protect their interests at workplaces. In spite of all these provisions, women who have joined the workforce do not experience the same privileges that men enjoy. Irrespective of the progressive efforts made at the national level and by many organisations, a great deal of inequality is found in workplaces across the country. Even today, women get discriminated against and exploited at work. The following describes the way women suffer discrimination and get exploited at work.

### **1.3.2.1 Gender Stereotyping at Work**

We often have deep-rooted ideas about the attributes and capacities of men and women. These shape our expectations of the roles they need to play in society. These are called stereotypes. We strongly feel that men are suitable for some jobs while women are suitable for some others. Such preconceptions still dominates our employment market and decide the work to be assigned to men and women.

Many of us have a strong feeling that men are physically stronger than women. They are better at handling risks and they are more intelligent than women, which helps them become decision-makers. They have better ability to take up responsibilities, and are more rational compared to women. As for women, we assume that they have a concern for others, are better at dealing with the public, display emotional sensitivity to people who surround them and are sacrificing by nature. Women are often judged as physically less capable, mentally less equipped and unsuited for challenging jobs. These are only biases that guide us and generate discriminatory practices for women in the employment market.

Padma Shri Sudha Murthy, Chairperson of the Infosys Foundation, a great social activist and writer, sent a post card to J.R.D.Tata on the gender bias his company TELCO was promoting through its recruitment procedures and denigrating the abilities of women.

TELCO had published an advertisement, which read as follows:

“Young energetic engineers required. Ladies need not apply.”

Sudha's letter posed a big question to J.R.D. Tata, the industrial tycoon of independent India: “What you are doing is wrong because TATA as a company is always ahead of its time. If a socially aware company like yours stops recruiting women, how do you expect society to change?”

J.R.D. Tata responded very positively to that letter and asked the recruitment team to invite Sudha for an interview, test her technical knowledge and instructed them to give her the job if she qualified for it. Finally, Sudha became the first woman engineering trainee on TELCO shop floor.

In the meantime, society has progressed. Women are being encouraged to enter STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields and the armed forces in our own country. We find women doing many top jobs like members of Board rooms, COEs, police services, piloting flights and fighter planes. The role of women scientists like M Vanitha and Ritu Karidhal in the ISRO mission, Chandrayaan 2, the stories of Indra Nooyi, Kiran Majumdar Shaw the billionaire entrepreneur, Kiran Bedi,

Bhawana Kanth , pilot of Indian Air force symbolise the breaking of the stereotypes. But these comprise a countable few. The uncountable many are still victims of gender stereotyping at work.

These uncountable many find themselves in a world where jobs are clearly segregated. Even today, we find positions of nursery teachers, nurses, teaching jobs, front office managers, assistants, attendants, secretary are occupied predominantly by women. These are called “pink-collar jobs”. Machine operators, captains of ships, members of the armed forces, CEOs happen to be men. Their jobs are known as “**white and blue-collared jobs**”, which are better paid.

Women are trying to break these gender stereotypes. A good example can be taken from our own state Odisha.

### Breaking Stereotypes

Mamata Sahu from Malkangiri, Odisha is now working as the Assistant Loco Pilot in Kharagpur Division of Indian Railways. Mamata's father is a farmer and her mother is a daily wage labourer. Her financial deprivations did not deter the girl from achieving her aim in life. Despite facing a lot of criticism from everyone in her locality she underwent training and succeeded in becoming the first ever woman loco pilot from the state. People started taunting her for making a foray into a male-dominated field. But these things did not dampen her spirits and she continued working sincerely. Beginning her career as the assistant pilot of a freight train, she has graduated to driving passenger trains, helping thousands of people reach their destinations.

Similarly, Kandhamal girl Sushree Sai Pranita Mohanty became the first female pilot from the district to have joined military aviation. She is stationed at the Meteorological Branch of the Indian Air Force at Gwalior.

### Discussion

#### Activity

Ask students to mention the names of a few women from their state or nation who have broken stereotypes.

- ◆ Do you think women have less capacity than men?
- ◆ Are we not wasting the potential in the country by sticking to gender-biased positions?
- ◆ Do you think these stereotypes influencing the employment market are reasonable?
- ◆ How can we end discrimination and stereotyping in the employment market?

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ Women have the same potential as men and the age-old mindset belittling the ability of women and preventing them from entering the employment market needs a drastic change.
- ◆ By allowing women to enter the employment market and giving them an equal space therein, we can ensure their right to livelihood and create a gender-neutral employment market.

#### 1.3.2.2 The Glass Ceiling

Top positions or leadership roles are always reserved for men. Whether it is banking, armed forces, industries or business corporates, men occupy the highest positions. As we know, top positions carry with them “three Ps”, which are “Power, Property and Prestige”. Women find it hard to reach top positions in the professional hierarchy. Women face many challenges in their

careers. The general bias against their capabilities, their motherhood roles and care burdens often prevent them from enjoying an uninterrupted career growth. This is grossly unfair to women. This process of making it very difficult for women to reach top positions in the professional ladder is called glass ceiling.

These barriers are artificial. They create “sticky floors” for women. Glass ceiling not only prevents women from reaching the highest positions, but also make women's work subsidiary. It undermines their self-esteem. It reinforces the relationship of superiority and inferiority between men and women. This happens in early youth and late youth stages when women land some lucrative jobs breaking prevalent stereotypes.

But, over the years, due to reforms introduced in the country through legislations, new consciousness among women, diversity and inclusivity at workplaces have enabled many women to shatter the glass ceiling. The following furnishes proof of that.

The following link projecting Indian women who have broken the glass ceiling (A short video of 4 minutes 7 seconds) may be projected in the class.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtTOWqYAdv8>

No doubt women have gone a long way at their workplaces and have broken the glass ceiling and emerged as role models for our young girls and women. But this does not mean that glass ceiling has completely disappeared. It still operates silently and many women keep fallings prey to it and accept it without protest.

Let the short movie of 1 minute47 seconds be played in the class. <https://youtu.be/FED6MenLsuA>

### Discussion

- ◆ From the movie, bring out the fictions that form the glass ceiling.
- ◆ What are the realities that allow the glass ceiling to block women's career path?
- ◆ Does not this syndrome undermine equal treatment and justice towards women, which are enshrined in our Constitution?
- ◆ Is not a change in the mindset and practice required urgently?
- ◆ What can women do to break these barriers?

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ Men and women are equally entitled to move ahead in their careers. So, they need equal opportunities.
- ◆ Women's biological uniqueness as bearers of children needs to be recognised and rewarded by removing the glass ceiling.
- ◆ Women need to be socialized in leadership positions by the family and educational institutions so that their leadership qualities can be manifested at the workplace.

### 1.3.2.3 Women and Pay Gap

Equality between women and men in the world of work has seen some encouraging improvements. But till date, women and men do not earn the same amount for doing the same kind of work. This is more discernible in the informal sector which is not governed by rules and regulations put in place by the government. Across the world, women still get paid 23 per cent less than men. This happens because women's work is under-valued and women tend to concentrate on different kinds of jobs. Women cannot negotiate or bargain to get properly remunerated for their labour power. Their family burdens make it difficult for them to migrate in search of better opportunities. They try to work for a pittance in nearby areas. Added to all these, gender discrimination, and entrenched biases against them result in this difference in wages. This difference in wages received by men and women is called gender pay gap. Gender pay gap is a hidden but strong indicator of gender discrimination at the workplace. Gender pay gap is very common in the unorganised sector. A male and a female nurse hardly receive equal pay. A male labourer and a female labourer do not receive the same wages.

Women are paid less on many grounds. Conscious and unconscious discrimination and biases in hiring and pay decisions prevalent in many organisations are a major factor responsible for the unequal pay given to women. Organisations pay less to women to accommodate their care and other responsibilities. Many women take up part-time, flexi time- and home-based jobs to strike a balance between their domestic and outdoor economic engagements. All these give their employers the pretext to give them a reduced remuneration.



- ◆ Gender pay gap indicates the inequalities faced by women in their access to work, in their progress of their career and the rewards they get from work.
- ◆ The pay gap is wider for part-time workers than full-time workers.
- ◆ Part-time jobs demand lower skills and are lower paid.
- ◆ Part-time works are less available in senior positions. So, very few women find themselves there.
- ◆ Women prefer part-time jobs to balance work and care burdens.
- ◆ Women are paid less for the nature of the job they do. They mainly do clerical jobs, care jobs, catering jobs, cashiering jobs, cleaning jobs. All these are low skill demanding jobs.
- ◆ As for men, they do more skilled jobs like manufacturing, construction, finance, business, insurance, which are assumed to be more difficult and useful.
- ◆ Even at a very high level e.g. in the medical and financial sectors, women are found to be earning less than men.
- ◆ Taking time off from jobs to bear and rear children also retards women's career progression and pay.

◆ Gender pay gap has a long history. Awareness of this gave birth to the first Women's Rights Movement in the

◆ The Indian Constitution recognizes the principle of 'Equal Pay for Equal Work' for both men and women, and 'Right to Work' through Article 39(d) and 41.

U.S.A. in 1848 known as the Seneca Falls Convention. This created a sensation in the western world among women about the pay discrimination they were encountering.

- ◆ The U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 also sought to end all forms of discrimination which also include pay discrimination.

Irrespective of such powerful movements and International Conventions, till date the world is not free from the practice of gender-based pay gaps. A short movie

- ◆ The Equal Remuneration Act 1976 has been a significant government step towards “equal pay for equal work”.
- ◆ India introduced the Minimum Wages Act in 1948. It was enforced to ensure the employers did not exploit employees with insufficient wages. Payment of wages below the minimum wage rate amounts to forced labour.

**Irrespective of all these provisions and legislations**

- ◆ The World Economic Forum on Global Gender Pay Gap 2020 records that India ranks 117th in terms of wage inequality.
- ◆ Women are paid 34% less than men for the same job requiring the same qualifications.
- ◆ Women in India earn 19% less than men.
- ◆ Men earn (Rs 242.49), which is Rs 46.19 more in comparison to what women receive (Rs 196.3).
- ◆ The gap touches 20% for skilled women and 30% for highly skilled occupations.
- ◆ Very recently, in India, a draft

of 2 minutes and 31 seconds can be projected in the class.

<https://youtu.be/mpE8ttCEd-w>

Bill has been prepared by the Centre for Law and Policy Research, 2019 titled Equality Bill. It is proposed to become an Act to give effect to Article 14 and 15 of the Constitution of India. This intends to prevent and prohibit all kinds of discrimination and harassment; to promote equality. This is expected to give wide publicity to the gender-based pay discrimination.

### Discussion

- ◆ Is it right to pay women less for the same job?
- ◆ Doesn't this affect the morale, equality and human rights of women?
- ◆ If we compare the time spent, the burden borne by women, do you think it is right to pay her less?
- ◆ Can you suggest ways to measure women's work properly?

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ Discrimination, stereotypes and practices denying women opportunities need to be removed.
- ◆ Equal pay for equal work is a human rights issue and this can reduce inequality between men and women.

### 1.3.2.4 Sexual Harassment of Women at workplaces

Exploitation of women at workplaces does not end with pay gap. Many women face gender-related abuse and exploitation when they go out to work. They are physically abused, verbally abused, sexually oppressed, and their labour power is exploited. This takes place both in organised and unorganised sectors.

Exploitation of women in workplaces takes many forms. Women are subjected to sexual coercion- for retention of and promotion in their jobs. Employees and co-workers of the opposite sex use bullying language for women employees. Discriminations are practised in the distribution of roles, responsibilities and remunerations. Very often they are not allowed to work in a safe space. In many cases working flexitime, part-time in the office are given to women to make them financially insecure. Employers often hesitate to give good designations to their women employees. They thereby stigmatize them and economically and emotionally marginalise them. Home-based work may appear to be lucrative for women, but it leads to their gradual exclusion. All these are hidden behind closed doors and very often constitute the untold stories of millions of women for whom a job is a bare necessity.

The 'Me Too' movement brought to the world's attention voices of harassed women, their stories of humiliation and sexual exploitation at workplace. This movement was started on the social media by Tarana Burke. She was an activist and sexual assault survivor. Her initiative aimed at empowering sexually assaulted women at workplaces through empathy and solidarity. In October, 2017, this movement went viral as a # hashtag on

social media. Soon it spread to all the countries including India. It was revealed that not only women doing low-paid jobs are exploited, women doing highly paid jobs face exploitation and harassment in the corporate sector, the film industry, the media, and civil society organisations.

- ◆ Human Rights Watch records that not paying wages to women is prevalent in workplaces.
- ◆ Women are asked for sexual favours, exposed to inappropriate jokes and comments, and unwanted physical contact that can amount to assault.
- ◆ Women in the Workplace report states that 35% of women in full-time corporate sector jobs have experienced sexual harassment.
- ◆ Another study estimates that 75% of women are subject to such hostile situations, but fail to report their harassment.
- ◆ The Guardian reports that over 50,000 women lose their jobs over maternity discrimination.
- ◆ Only 10% of domestic workers worldwide are employed in countries that extend them equal protection under national labour laws. And the remaining 90 % are not protected by law.
- ◆ The short movie “Shame on us” of a duration of 2 minutes 28 second may be projected.

<https://youtu.be/MO5sBmyhuiM>

- ◆ In 2013 the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act was passed by the Indian Parliament to provide protection to women in their work places. This Act was passed in response to the Supreme Court's verdict on the famous case of Vishakha v State of Rajasthan.

**Activity:** In the class, the situation of a workplace can be created where a male colleague verbally harasses a woman worker. The entire process of approaching the ICC (Internal Complaint Committee), ICC members taking decisions, the stipulated days, and the hearing are to be recreated.

### Discussion

- ◆ Don't you feel the workplace needs to be a safe place for both a man and a woman?
- ◆ Do we treat our mothers, sisters in the same way at home as some male workers or employers treat a woman in the workplace?
- ◆ Don't you think that sexual violence at workplace creates anxiety and fear in women?
- ◆ Don't you feel men take advantage of women's situation and behave with them in this manner?

### Lessons learnt

- u A workplace needs to be a safe place for both men and women.
- ◆ Women have the same rights as men to work in a violence-free environment.
- ◆ Women need to be conscious of their right to dignity, safety and to raise a voice against exploitation.
- ◆ Right at the moment harassment takes place we need to approach appropriate mechanisms to find solutions to these issues.
- ◆ Men need to develop respect for women at workplaces.

### 1.3.3 Working Women and Role Conflict

Women today pursue dual careers. They are no longer confined to their homes. They take up jobs which require them to go out. Thus, women working outside home operate in two

contrasting worlds: the world of work and the world of home. The demands of these two worlds often conflict with each other. The world of home is often seen as the natural world of operation for a woman where she is expected to provide care and services to the members of her family without any expectations. The world of work expects women to be highly productive and professional and to bring profit to the organisation. This creates a role conflict for working women.

Today, women are multitasking in multiple roles. They work outside home to earn a living and secure a better standard of living for their families. They have to work as mothers, spouses, housekeepers as well as do a full-time job outside the home. The role of a home maker and a salaried employee are not mutually exclusive. Work responsibilities and family obligations compete for time, sincerity and attention. The more time the woman allocates to one domain leads to lesser time for the other. Too much demand and pressure at both the places create a situation of role conflict for women.

Of late, joint families are disappearing and nuclear families are replacing them. However, patriarchy and the conviction that “care and domestic chores” are women's domain has not disappeared. In this context, the woman who takes up a double burden becomes hard pressed. A working mother needs to perform all her chores and go to her office where work awaits her. Her output is also assessed there. Sometimes she becomes inattentive, both at home and office. At home, she is reminded of the pending tasks and the penalty for delay in accomplishing them and at office, she feels disturbed thinking of her ailing children, children's studies, arranging a party for her child's birthday. These contrasting demands trigger role conflict and anxiety of a high order among all working women.

- ◆ The Maternity Benefit Act of 1961 has been amended in 2017. It is now known as the "Maternity Act". It has made the following provisions to encourage women to work.
- ◆ The Act has increased the duration of paid maternity leave available to working mothers from 12 weeks to 26 weeks.
- ◆ An important provision, Section 11A, introduced by the Maternity Act is that any establishment which has 50 or more employees shall have crèche facilities.
- ◆ In 2017, after the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act was enacted, a new bill called Paternity Benefit Bill has been passed.
- ◆ This Bill entitles any man with less than two surviving children to paternity benefit for a period of fifteen days.
- ◆ But it is noted that men in India are reluctant to avail themselves of this leave because of the old mindset and customary practices that emphasises that child bearing and rearing are maternal duties.
- ◆ However, progressive companies have made necessary provisions and are trying to encourage men to take paternity leave.

### Discussion

- ◆ If women having received education and training are now able to work outside home, can men not do household chores after

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ There is nothing like a man's job and a woman's job.
- ◆ Family burdens need to be shared and both boys and girls need training to shoulder these right from childhood.



undergoing training?

- ◆ If the task of fulfilling the financial the financial needs of a family is shared by men and women, why can't household responsibilities be shared by men and women?
- ◆ When women are burdened with care and the responsibility to earn are they not exploited?

- ◆ Sharing of household responsibilities needs to be seen as a virtue and a source of pride rather than as something to be ashamed of.
- ◆ We need to feel that a woman who works outside home does so to ensure a better standard of living for the members of her family, but not to boost her ego.
- ◆ We need to have empathy for a working woman and allow her to do justice to the work she does.

#### 1.4 Women, Community and Society

Next to family, an individual is exposed to the community of which he/she is a part and then to the larger society. Community is a smaller version of society in terms of territory and population. As an individual grows older, his/her needs increase. This requires him/her to interact with the community and society.

Men and women together constitute a community and are members of society. Their equal participation in the affairs of the community and society is a vital need. They therefore should benefit equally from the community and society. Moreover, they should be able to interact with others and move within these spheres, need to have dignity and enjoy resources having equal access to and control over them. But it is often seen that the community culture undermines the position of women and

undermines it in the larger society. Their safety, dignity and rights in the community and society are often jeopardised. They encounter violence of different types; their dignity is undermined by the languages used in everyday life and they are denied rights over property. All these make their participation in the community and society less fulfilling than that of their male counterparts. They fail to freely move around; they often find it difficult to accept the language used against them and their lack of rights over property makes them face economic hardship. In this sub-unit these aspects are brought under discussion.

#### **1.4.1. Violence against Women in Public Spaces**

Communities and societies need to be safe places for individuals to live in, to interact with each other and to move around. But very often we notice violence affects people in these spaces. Both men and women fall victim to violence. But, comparatively, violence is directed more against women. This indicates the unequal status we give our women in our communities and societies and women's vulnerability to violence.

Women in all communities, countries and cultures experience violence. Across status groups, classes, age structures, caste positions and religious affiliations, they face violence virtually in all spheres of life. Similarly, no space and no time is violence-free for a woman. She faces violence at home, in the school, in the public transport system, at work, on the street, in the institutions where she works and in times of peace and conflict. Violence is thus present throughout the life of a woman. It affects girl children, adolescents, young women, and adult women. Even elderly women are not spared. The forms of violence, however, appear to vary when we adopt a lifecycle approach to women's situation in society. We find that violence is rooted in the gender inequality women face throughout their lives from childhood through to old age.

It is a well-established fact that violence affects women's general well-being, physical as well as mental. It prevents women from meaningfully participating in social processes. It impacts families, community, and the country at large. It seriously affects their health and productivity. We have already discussed the violence that is faced by women in the sphere of domesticity. Here, we will discuss how the same affects women in the public sphere.

### Forms of Violence Against Women in the Public Sphere

- ◆ Eve teasing
- ◆ Stalking
- ◆ Rape and gang rapes
- ◆ Sexual Harassment at workplace
- ◆ Witchcraft apprehension induced murders
- ◆ Murders
- ◆ Acid throwing
- ◆ Body Shaming
- ◆ Sex trafficking
- ◆ Violence against women in custody

#### **Eve teasing:**

Sexual harassment of people through verbal abuse or demeaning vulgar gestures is defined as “eve-teasing”. It includes lewd gestures, winking, whistling, staring, touching inappropriately, passing sexually explicit comments; singing obscene songs, groping, and so on. It represents public acts of sexual harassment. It is a common form of public violence against women in South Asia and is most widespread in India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Compared to women and girls, boys and men face fewer instances of eve teasing.

- ◆ Section 294 of the Indian Penal Code states that, if anyone does any obscene acts in a public place or sing, recite or utters any obscene song, ballad, words in a public place or even a place that is close to a public place and such an act causes annoyance to others, it will amount to an offence under Section 294. The person will be punished with imprisonment up to 3 months or fine or both.
- ◆ A person who expresses words, gestures, acts with an intention to hurt the modesty of the women then such person will be penalized under Section 509 of IPC. This section is also referred to as eve-teasing section of the IPC.
- ◆ A New legislation on eve-teasing was proposed by the National Commission for Women (NCW) in 1988.
- ◆ Only the state of Tamil Nadu has passed the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of eve-teasing Act, 1998 (TN Act No. of 1998).

### **Stalking:**

Stalking is unwanted and/or repeated surveillance by an individual or group of another person. It is again more directed towards women and girls. Stalking of girls or women by men consists of following or contacting a woman, despite clear indication of disinterest by the woman, or monitoring her use of the Internet or electronic communication. It amounts to an unpleasant experience on the part of a woman.

These days, using mobile phones and other electronic gadgets to send sexually coloured remarks to girls has become quite common. This is considered cybercrime.

- ◆ This small video of 3 minutes 15 seconds can be shown in the class.  
<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x7slc10>
- ◆ Women who are being stalked can complain to the National Commission for Women (NCW) and the Commission will take the matter up with the police. A woman living in any part of India can file this complaint.
- ◆ If a woman is being stalked in any part of India, the NCW can be contacted by calling 0111-23219750.

### **Rapes and gang rapes:**

Rapes and gang rapes of women are occurring daily worldwide. Rape is an unlawful sexual activity and sexual intercourse carried out forcibly against a girl's or woman's will by a man. Gang rape is the same act being perpetrated by more than one man or a group of men. Rapes / gang rapes take place due to the whims of some perpetrators, or to take revenge on women or their families. Rapes and gang rapes have been taking place across ages. The media reports such incidents every day.

The dark incidents of gang rape which were highlighted by in the last decade must be fresh in the memories of most of you.

- ◆ The deadliest gang rape of the last decade, popularly known as the Nirbhaya case, took place on 16th December, 2012 where Jyoti Singh, a 23-year-old female physiotherapy intern was gang raped.
- ◆ The 2013 Mumbai gang-rape case happened just a few months after the horrifying Nirbhaya rape case. A 22-year-old photojournalist was gang-raped by 5 people, who also

included a juvenile. This is known as Shakti Mills Case 2013.

- ◆ Two minor girls from KatraSadatganj village in UP's Badaun district were first gang-raped and then hanged from a tree. This is known as the Badaun Gang Rape Case 2014.
- ◆ The Unnao rape case took place in 2017. A 17-year-old girl went to meet a political leader to seek help in getting employment and was kidnapped and raped by him and three others.
- ◆ In the Kathua Rape Case 2018, a nomadic minor girl, AsifaBano was kidnapped and gang-raped in a small village temple in Kathua and murdered. The little girl was sedated, tortured, and then finally killed. Dr. Priyanka Reddy, a veterinary doctor from Shamshabad was raped and then burnt by 4 men from Narayanpet. However, the perpetrators were soon shot to death in a police encounter. This is known as the Priyanka Reddy Hyderabad Case 2019

(In a judicial verdict, Justice Banumathi said that offences against women are not a women's issue alone but a human rights issue. It is important to ensure that gender justice does not remain only on paper.)

- ◆ Subsequently, to ensure the safety and security of women within the national boundaries, the Government of India created a special fund. This fund was named as Nirbhaya Fund. This was announced by the then Finance Minister in his 2013 budget speech. It was decided that the Government contribution of Rs. 1000 crore for the empowerment, safety and security of women and girl children will be placed in the National Budget.
- ◆ The fund was used to create "One Step Centres" or "Sakhi"s across the country, where women who were victims of violence could find support.

### **Sexual Harassment at Workplace:**

Workplaces are units of production. Optimum productivity can be ensured when the workplace becomes a fulfilling place for the workers. One of the prime conditions for providing a fulfilling and congenial environment is to ensure safety to the workers. A safe environment can promote physical and mental wellness, which enables a worker to contribute to his/her fullest capacity. But it is noticed that our workplaces are not always safe for our workers. Both men and women very often find their workplaces unsafe for them. But the lack of safety is more serious for women. Women become vulnerable to various forms of harassment at their workplaces.

Women face harassment of various kinds at their workplaces. This renders the environment of the workplace hostile for them. Here again, unequal power relations make women victims of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment at workplace is a clear violation of women's right to equality, life and liberty. It undermines the dignity of women. To be more specific, sexual harassment clearly violates the fundamental rights of a woman. It goes against the Right to Equality under Article 14. It is also against article 15 which is Prohibition of discrimination. Their right to life under Article 21 is also threatened by harassment at workplace.

- ◆ In the landmark judgment in the Vishaka and others v. State of Rajasthan case of 1997, the Supreme Court of India defined sexual harassment at the workplace.
- ◆ Subsequent to this, the Bill for the Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment was moved in the Parliament in

2005. The new Bill defined “sexual harassment” and also provided for a redressal mechanism through “Internal Complaints Committee” in the workplace or “Local Complaints Committee” at the district level. These committees are empowered to investigate complaints of sexual harassment at workplace.

- ◆ Women who are employed as well as those who enter the workplace as clients, customers or apprentices besides students and research scholars in colleges and universities and patients in hospitals have been brought within the scope of the Bill.
- ◆ However, domestic workers working at home till date have not been brought within the scope of this Bill.

The Sexual Harassment Act (Hereby called as an 'Act') was finally enacted in 2013 for the prevention of sexual harassment against women at workplace in the whole of India. Section 2(N) of the act defines sexual harassment as any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behavior (whether directly or by implication):

1. Physical contact and advances; or
2. A demand or request for sexual favours; or
3. Making sexually coloured remarks; or
4. Showing pornography; or
5. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.



### **Witchcraft apprehension induced murders:**

In the era of science and technology, people believe in reality and are governed by rationality. But there are people who still believe in witchcraft, which has no basis in fact or rationality. Lack of education, ignorance, traditional beliefs account for people's faith in witchcraft. They attribute every mishap to the practice of witchcraft. This leads them to murder the person alleged to be practising witchcraft. Men normally brand women as dakans. Deep-rooted superstitions and systems built on prejudices and patriarchy lead men to put the blame on women.

#### **◆ Shocking facts**

- ◆ In our state, Odisha, Sundergarh, Jajpur, Mayurbhanj districts where women have been killed, beheaded on suspicion of witchcraft.
- ◆ According to police data published by the Times of India, some 123 people were killed by mobs in Jharkhand between May 2016 and 2019. These people, mostly women, were accused of practising sorcery.
- ◆ In 2018, 73 witchcraft-related cases were reported across Odisha, out of which 18 involved murders.
- ◆ Odisha has witnessed at least four killings every month in 2021.
- ◆ The NCRB declared Odisha to have had the second-highest number of deaths due to witch-hunting after Jharkhand.
- ◆ The Odisha High Court said that according to NCRB records, more than 2,500 victims were tortured and killed in witch hunts between 2000 and 2016. Most of them were women.

- ◆ The murder of Dr Narendra Dabholkar, a fighter against witch hunting in 2013 led the Maharashtra government to pass its anti-superstition law.
- ◆ Several Indian states like Odisha, Assam, Jharkhand have introduced laws to prevent it, but activists say they are inadequate.
- ◆ Assam's Anti-Witch Hunting Act, 2015 recognizes all cases of and attempts at witch-hunting as non-bailable, cognizable and non-compoundable.
- ◆ The Act prescribes a prison term of up to seven years and a fine of up to 5 lakh for calling a person 'witch'.
- ◆ However, these acts have proved quite ineffective till date and blind beliefs in many.

### **Acid throwing:**

Acid throwing is a violent assault on a woman. Aggrieved men throw acid on women/ girls' faces or onto their body. They do this with the intention of disfiguring them, inflicting physical pain on them, or killing them. Perpetrators of these attacks throw corrosive liquids at the victims. The acid burns women, and damages their skin tissues. Acid attacks lead to dissolving of the bones and permanent blindness. Girls and women are the usual victims of such assaults. The victims are attacked over domestic or land disputes, a rejected marriage proposal or rejected sexual advances.

Acid attacks traumatize their victims. An acid attack changes the entire life course of the victim. Most survivors of an acid attack are forced to give up their studies, their occupations and other important activities. The victims are never able to lead a normal life.

- ◆ The movie “ Chhapak” (2020) directed by Meghna Gulzar is based on the life story of Laxmi Agarwal. Laxmi herself is an acid attack survivor. She has taken the initiative to establish a N.G.O to promote solidarity among acid attack survivors. This N.G.O. provides legal services to girls and women victimized by this form of violence.
- ◆ Our state Odisha has witnessed acid attack cases. These cases received wide media coverage. Two very widely known acid attack cases involved Poonam Singhal in Kalahandi, and Pramodini Roul in Jagatsingpur district.
- ◆ By virtue of Criminal Law (Amendment Act) 2013, Section 326A and 326B were inserted in the Indian Penal Code. These sections mention the punishment for acid attacks and attempted acid attacks. They make acid attack a separate, cognizable and non-bailable offence under IPC.
- ◆ The short video clipping of a duration of 4 minutes and 41 seconds on acid throwing can be projected in the class.  
<https://youtu.be/4tEMLUzqHsg>
- ◆ The Story of Saroj Sahu who married the acid-attack survivor Pramodini Roul on 1st March, 2021 can be brought into the discussion.

### **Body Shaming:**

Body shaming refers to the practice of passing humiliating remarks on the shape or size of another person's body. It is a form of bullying that can result in severe emotional trauma. Body shaming is done by parents, siblings, friends, enemies, and schoolmates and is often portrayed in the media. Men and women, boys and girls

experience body shaming. However, our media, movies and daily interactions body shame girls more frequently than they body shame boys. The media commonly portray overweight characters as butts of jokes in a show, or engage in dispensing “fat jokes”. Our literature and folk songs are full of body shaming, especially taunting girls for the size, height and the complexion of their bodies.

Very often we find boys and even sometimes neighbours, community members, teachers calling children “Mottu”, “Pattlu”, “Chottu”, “Kalu”, “Dengi”, “Kani/Kana-Squint eyed”. These are body shaming words which hurt the person to whom these are addressed to.

- ◆ An exemplary and value-based video on bodyshaming of a duration of 7minutes and 27 seconds can be shown to the students.

[https://youtu.be/k\\_3a-RRfvtQ](https://youtu.be/k_3a-RRfvtQ)

### **Sex trafficking:**

Sex trafficking is the largest growing commercial enterprise carried out in many nations. Women are taken and are sold off. They are used to mint money for some people who manage to keep them in a state of slavery. Force, fraud, or coercion, manipulation and false promises are used to capture girls and women for commercial use. The International Labour Organisation estimates that women and girls make up 98% of sex trafficking victims.

- ◆ Sex Trafficking is trafficking of girls and women for the purpose of sexual exploitation, including sexual slavery.
- ◆ Pakistan, Thailand, China, India, and Bangladesh are among the top 10 for countries with the largest number of trafficking victims around the world.
- ◆ India is at the top of the list with 14 million victims. The National Crime Record Bureau states that 95% of the women trafficked in India are forced into prostitution.
- ◆ Trafficking in Human Beings or Persons is prohibited under the Constitution of India under Article 23 (1)
- ◆ The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA) is the premier legislation for prevention of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.
- ◆ Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) criminalized trafficking offenses that involved exploitation that included any act of physical exploitation or any form of sexual exploitation, slavery or practices similar to slavery, and servitude.

### **Violence against women in custody**

Prisons are not violence-free zones. Prisoners experience violence during their stay in prisons. While male prisoners are vulnerable to physical violence, women prisoners become susceptible to sexual violence. Women are often coerced into providing sex in return for "favours" such as extra food or personal hygiene products, opportunity to meet their relatives and kin or to avoid punishment. Three cases of custodial rape, which occurred in quick succession in India i.e. the Mathura case in Maharashtra (1974), Rameeza Bee in Andhra Pradesh (1978) and Maya Tyagi in Uttar Pradesh (1980) moved women activists in India to raise their voice against custodial rape in the late 1970s and 1980s.

### Discussion

- ◆ Don't you think Female Genital Mutilation and forced sterilization constitute a barbaric practice against women which affects their health, their choices, decisions and their reproductive rights?
- ◆ Girls need to spell out how they take eve teasing? Does the class feel that this practice indicates a man's arbitrary power to inflict shame on the girls and women in public spaces?
- ◆ Would you like someone to keep unwanted surveillance on you by stalking? Does not is hamper the dignity and freedom of the girls?
- ◆ Don't you think rapes/ gang rapes are the instances of inhuman treatments, brutality against women. Don't you feel women too need to move safe and sound like men? Don't you think security of our women is our social responsibility?
- ◆ Don't you feel witchcraft

### Lessons learnt

- ◆ Women's health, their reproductive rights and their choice and decisions with regard to reproduction and their body needs to be honoured. We cannot forcibly inflict pain on anyone.
- ◆ Women like men need to move safe with dignity. The practice of eve teasing and stalking affect women's dignity and right to have safe movement. Boys need to give up and prevent such practice and girls need to strongly protest against them.
- ◆ Women's safety and security in public spaces is a collective social responsibility.

apprehension induced murders are based on unscientific ideas, blind beliefs and are mob driven? Are they not discriminatory attitude and inhuman actions towards women?

- ◆ Is it not a barbaric and cowardice act to make acid attack on a girl?
- ◆ Do you think appearances really matter? Have we any right to comment on someone's body image? Don't you think inner beauty is more important than physical looks?
- ◆ Do you think uniformed officials, wielding State power and authority should sexually assault women in custody? Is it not a violation of the code of conduct of public institutions which are meant for the care and correction?

Brutal activities like rapes and gang rapes, acid throwing need to be condemned openly and need corporal punishment on an immediate basis.

- ◆ Beauty is not the bodily manifestation, rather it is skin deep.
- ◆ Men and women need to share equal space in this world. Tolerance and respect need to be developed among boys and men all throughout their socialization process to create a violence free world for women.

### 1.4.2 Gender-sensitive language and communication

Language is man made. It is a means of expression. It reflects our thinking processes, our judgements on the capability and

competence of individuals to whom they are applied. Simply put, language is an expression of the way we value some people. Very often our language is gender biased. The language we use in everyday life, in our popular culture is loaded with such biases. Even our texts, school curriculum and literary classics are not free of these.

Sometimes social groups use language as a tool to assert and maintain their dominance over others. It reflects the superiority of one group and the inferiority of another group. Gender groups also suffer from this linguistic dominance and differentiation.

A close look at the language we use on a regular basis shows how it differentiates between men and women, boys and girls. In a 2011 study, it has been noted that countries with gendered languages experienced higher average gender inequality. Contrastingly, a 2019 study reveals that using gender-neutral pronouns increases positive attitudes towards women and LGBTQ people. They help in reducing the prominence of male identity and subsequently in generating less gender-based bias.

#### **1.4.2. 1 Gendered language**

Some words used in our daily interactions and conversations project male dominance while some words and sentences express attitudes undermining women. These exemplify respect for one group and disrespect for the other and are called “gendered language”. The language used to undermine and belittle women is offensive in nature. Such offensive language is called “sexist language”.



- ◆ We use the term “mankind” to show our collective identity while nearly 50% of our population are women.
- ◆ The gendered nature of language can also be noted from the very frequent use of the titles “Mr.,” “Miss,” and “Mrs.”. “Mr.” refers to any man regardless of his marital status. It is applicable to both married and unmarried men. But we often use “Miss” for indicating the unmarried status of a woman while “Mrs.” to define a married woman. This type of usage has a bias towards a particular sex group.
- ◆ Even the use of gender-neutral words like “actors”, “doctors”, “drivers”, “pilots”, “captain” always make us imagine the presence of men in those positions.
- ◆ Similarly, when we use words like “CEO” or “author”, immediately the image of men flash before our eyes.
- ◆ Masculine pronouns (he, him, his) are also used commonly to refer to people in general. To give an example here “A teacher should know how to communicate with his students.”
- ◆ One more example indicates the tendency for the male version to come first in binomials such as ‘men and women’, ‘brothers and sisters’, ‘boys’ and girls’, or ‘Mr and Mrs’.
- ◆ Unmarried girls are termed as “spinsters” while unmarried boys are referred to as “bachelors”. Spinster means an unmarried older woman whereas the word “bachelor” simply means an unmarried man. It does not imply an older man.

### 1.4.2.2 Sexist Language

Use of words or language can also have sexual connotations. Sexism in language manifests itself when language devalues members of a certain gender. Sexist language, in many instances, promotes superiority and arbitrariness of the males and humiliates women. It creates a wrong biological image of women, affects their consciousness, and erodes the feeling of self-worth in women. Women are being humiliated in the lyrics and depictions through the use of sexist language.

- ◆ Popular songs like “*Choli kepichhekya hey*” or “*Tu Cheejbadi he mastmast*”, “*Jiskibiwimoti, Uski bi badakaam hey*” are examples of sexist language. The use of the word “item” for a woman is derogatory. It commodifies her as an object in the market.
- ◆ Sexist jokes not only objectify women, but also promote violence or prejudices against women.
- ◆ We can also note the use of sexist language in our daily conversations. To give some examples: Slangs and name calling – All slangs in almost all languages, even in our own mother tongue Odia, exist in the form of derogatory terms used with reference to mothers and sisters.
- ◆ A Delhi High Court Verdict in 2020 December states that using sexist language against women can attract charges of sexual harassment under the Indian Penal Code.

(Let the teacher project the two short videos of 2 minute 27 seconds on language and a popular Odia song of a duration of 3 minutes and 20 seconds in the class.)

<https://youtu.be/iU-xCSU-Vlw>

<https://youtu.be/fJYcDRqi9-Y>

<b>Mankind</b>	<b>Humanity</b>
<b>Man's achievement</b>	<b>Human achievement</b>
<b>The common man</b>	<b>The average person, ordinary people</b>
<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Chairperson</b>
<b>Businessman</b>	<b>Business executive</b>
<b>layman</b>	<b>Lay person</b>
<b>Fore father</b>	<b>Ancestor</b>
<b>Early man</b>	<b>Early people</b>
<b>Fireman</b>	<b>Fire fighter</b>
<b>Sales man</b>	<b>Sales person</b>

### 1.4.2. 3 Gender-neutral language

Using proper language is a matter of awareness and individual conscience. We need not use words which demean, subjugate or offend people with whom we interact. Both boys and girls, men and women should develop the courage of conscience to resist such use of words, when these are used by their parents, teachers, friends, colleagues and bosses. We need to use language that conveys respect for each other. This will create a more tolerant and equal society.

Making language gender-free or avoiding the use of sexist language is termed “verbal sanitation”. As we need to clean our environment, we also need to clean our vocabulary. So, we should be careful about using a language which is gender-neutral rather than gendered. Gender-neutral language or gender-inclusive

language is the language that avoids bias towards a particular sex group.

Many words that incorporate the word 'man', such as 'man-made', 'mankind', 'manpower' which we have discussed earlier have perfectly acceptable gender-neutral alternatives: for example, 'artificial' or 'synthetic', 'humankind', and 'workforce'.

Literature, media, popular culture, common usages need to be screened and scanned by the creators and users. Girls and women need to reject words or language, which they find disrespectful or demeaning.

#### Discussion

- ◆ Don't you feel gender-sensitive language is discriminatory and violate the dignity of women?
- ◆ How would you feel if such language is used for you?
- ◆ Don't you think our literature, popular culture continue to use such a language and need proper screening to avoid the use of such words?

#### Lessons learnt

- ◆ Language needs to be an equaliser. Men and women need to lead a life of respect and dignity. We need to avoid the use of gendered language and sexist language in all spheres of life to avoid belittling and offending girls and women and to honour their dignity.
- ◆ Use of gendered language needs to be criticised publicly.
- ◆ The use of such language needs to be recognised as a criminal offence.

### 1.4.3 Women and Property Rights:

Property simply means what a person owns. Ownership of assets allows people to lead an economically secure life. Art.17 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Art. 13- 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discriminations against Women states that both men and women have the right to own property. Women's property rights are also implicit in the Millennium Development Goals, specifically Goal 1 and Goal 3. Property rights are actually human rights. But, in many countries, women's property rights are restricted by norms, religious traditions, social customs, and legislations. For a long time, India was one among them. According to UN-Habitat, 1 in 4 developing countries has laws that prevent women from owning property.

In India, property is treated as the monopoly of the men. Women were deprived of property rights. Even today, property is always in the names of their fathers or in the names of their husbands. Property is hardly acquired or held by women. In India, around 87.3% of women are dependent on agriculture. But 10.34 per cent among them own land, which is the most important household asset. You might have seen or heard from your families that, in the past, daughters had no share in their parent's property. Sisters remained at the mercy of their brothers after their fathers' demise. Married women had almost no rights to their parental property, and widows invariably lived at the mercy of their sons and other male members of their in-laws' families.

But property is a powerful means to better women's status in the family and in society, to eradicate their poverty and to ensure a violence-free and healthy life for them. Land and property ownership empowers women and provides them with income and security. It increases their political participation and empowers them. Women's lack of property rights also results in domestic violence.

### 1.4.3.1 What do property rights mean?

Property rights include the legal right to acquire, own, transfer and sell property. It also empowers the person to keep one's wages, enters into contracts and bring lawsuits. They can also collect rent from that asset. Women in different capacities need property rights. These capacities are: as married or unmarried daughters, as married or deserted wives, and as mothers and widowed mothers. Even women in live-in relations need property rights.

### 1.4.3.2 Women's Property Rights in the Indian Legal System

The Indian Succession Act, 1925 was the first Act relating to property rights passed during the colonial era. This Act was silent over women's right to property. But this Act was overridden by the customary laws of the communities relating to property rights of women. Region brought differences in customary laws. Accordingly, there were variations in laws regulating property inheritance

- ◆ So far as religions are concerned, the inheritance of property was and still is governed by personal laws. However, Laws for Hindu women were also applicable for women from the Jain, Sikh and Buddhist communities.
- ◆ So far as regions are concerned there are four types of regions based customary laws that govern succession to property. They are:
  - ◆ Dayabhaga- in Bengal in eastern India and the adjoining areas
  - ◆ Mayukha in Bombay, Konkan and Gujarat in the western part
  - ◆ Marumakkattayam or Nambudri in Kerala in far south and
  - ◆ Mitakshara in other parts of India, with slight variations

These customary laws never clearly spelt out the property rights of women.

- ◆ The Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act, 1937 was passed by the British Government. This act for the first-time conferred rights of succession on the Hindu widow beyond the “streedhan” (properties gifted to her at the time of marriage by both sides of the family and by relatives and friends). But it was not widely accepted by the communities.

The Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856 clearly denied a Hindu widow the right to property, or maintenance from her dead husband's property (self-acquired and joint family property), if she married again. The Hindu Women's Property Right Act of 1937 allowed single widows, i.e., widows who did not remarry some right to maintenance and property out of the joint family estate.

The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 was the first act of independent India to provide property entitlements. But it did not give daughters any right to property. The 1956 Succession Act, through Section 4(2), kept agricultural land out of its purview. In case of a divorce, the woman becomes entitled to maintenance, but she gets no entitlement on her husband's property and assets. Moreover, women's work in the care economy and the household enterprises, be it a handicraft unit or a petty shop or in the household agricultural field, remains unremunerated. The property and price generated by them goes to the pockets of their male partners.

The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 allowed widows to have a right to inheritance from their deceased husbands' property, even if they remarry. The major provisions of the Act included the

following:

- ◆ Claims of female heirs other than the widows were recognized on property.
- ◆ Remarriage, conversion and violating rules of chastity are no longer held as grounds for disinheriting a woman.
- ◆ Even the unborn child, son or daughter, has a right if she/he was in the womb at the time of the death of the intestate, if born subsequently.

On September 9, 2005, the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 was amended. According to Hindu Succession Amendment Act, 2005, every daughter, whether married or unmarried, is considered a member of her father's Hindu Undivided Family (HUF). She can even be appointed as 'karta' ( manager) of her father's property.

- ◆ The amendment now grants daughters the same rights, duties, liabilities and disabilities that were earlier limited to sons.
- ◆ The daughter shall now have the same rights in the coparcenary property (ancestral property of the Hindu undivided family) as a son.
- ◆ This amendment also repeals Section 23 of the Hindu Succession Act which denied a female heir to ask for partition in respect of a dwelling house, wholly occupied by a joint family, until the male heirs choose to divide their respective shares.
- ◆ Section 24 of the Act which denied rights of a widow to inherit her husband's property upon her re-marriage has been repealed. This Act has brought about a central amendment which is applicable to all the state governments.



### 1.4.3.3 The functionality of Women's Property Rights

Laws relating to women's property rights are becoming progressively clear and women-friendly. But much more still remains to be done in this area. Customary laws and stigmas prevent women from claiming property and inheritance.

The practice of Haqtyag' or the sacrifice of right is one such custom which is prevalent in Rajasthan. It involves women giving up their claims to ancestral property. While it is technically supposed to be voluntary, women comply with the custom to avoid stigma from their family and other members of society. Even in other parts of the country, there are countless instances of women simply giving away their share of property to their brothers since it is supposed to be indicative of a sacrificial trait in women, something which is exalted.

However, Court interventions have been able to ensure property rights to women.

#### Discussion

- ◆ Why do we follow discriminatory practices with respect to property and inheritance?
- ◆ Why it is expected from the women to sacrifice their rights?
- ◆ Don't you think individuals, families and society need to change their mind-sets and enable women to assert their right to property?

#### Lessons learnt

- ◆ Women and men have equal rights over property as members of the society.
- ◆ We need to give up the wrong notion that property is created only by men and they have exclusive rights over them. Women equally create property and therefore they should have equal rights over them.
- ◆ When women can enjoy their rights over inheritance and property, then it will lead to their real empowerment.

### 1.5 Key Take aways from the Module:

Thus, after going through the module, we may consider the following key points:

- ◆ Different gender groups compose our society. They contribute equally to the functioning of society. So, all these gender groups need to enjoy equal status and equal rights in society.
- ◆ Gender equality is a precondition for better human development, economic progress and sustainable development. The fundamental principle of development seeks to ensure that “ The last ones need to be attended” and they include everyone i.e. men, women and the third gender population.
- ◆ Biological differences often manifest themselves in social differences between men and women. Women are treated as inferior; they are prevented from enjoying opportunities and resources and rights in society and their role is underestimated. But we have to remember that women are unique creations of nature and their contribution to the continuance of a society is precious. So, biological differences need to be celebrated and social differences are to be avoided.
- ◆ The birth of a child is to be celebrated in the family irrespective of the child's sex. Both boys and girls have the right to life since their conception. We have no right to kill a female foetus or kill a girl child during her infancy which is morally unacceptable and creates practical problems for the future survival of a community or society.
- ◆ As educated members of families we need to see to it that boys

and girls enjoy their child right We have to be vigilant against discriminatory treatments on the grounds of gender and raise our voice against depriving a child of his/ her rights or an adult of his/her right to life, education, health, nutrition and recreation.

- ◆ Elders need family care. Particularly, grandmothers who play a pivotal role in shaping a family through their invaluable contributions deserve care, respect, appreciation, affection and integration into the families they live in. Their satisfaction and happiness will make a family a better place to live in.
- ◆ Widowhood is just a part of the life of some women whose spouses die early. Compassion, care, honouring the human rights of the widows, sympathy and empathy can enable the widows to lead a decent life in society. They should never be stigmatized.
- ◆ We all need to recognise and appreciate the exhausting and selfless work of our mothers at home. Their sacrifice and contribution enable us and other members of the family to lead a comfortable life. So, their contributions need to be appreciated and recognised by all of us.
- ◆ Both men and women are productive. There is no perceptible natural difference in productive ability between women and men. Being productive is a matter of education, training and socialisation. So, we need to change our outlook on expressions such as 'a man's job' and 'a woman's job'. When men and women will work together, they will contribute towards a higher GDP and higher growth rate.

- ◆ Family burdens need to be shared and both boys and girls need to be trained to do so right from childhood.
- ◆ Sharing of household responsibilities needs to be seen as a virtue and should be a source of pride rather than shame.
- ◆ Freedom to choose one's partner and to marry by consent should be available to boys as well as girls. Marriage by consent can contribute towards making a union stronger and lasting.
- u Ban on child marriage can promote human rights. It can open new opportunities for children's education and economic self-sufficiency and will reduce inequality, poverty and violence against them.
- ◆ Women and men need to be treated as equals in a marriage. Dowry devalues women. So, young boys and girls need to protest against this practice.
- ◆ Violence against women constitutes a sheer disregard to her liberty, dignity and human rights.
- ◆ Women's health, their reproductive rights and their choices and decisions with regard to reproduction need to be honoured. No harm should be done to their body.
- ◆ Men and women have equal right to move ahead in their careers. So, they need equal opportunities. The biological uniqueness and contributions of women need to be celebrated and these should not diminish her career opportunities.
- ◆ Equal pay for equal work is a human rights issue and this can reduce the inequality between men and women.

- ◆ Women have the same rights as men to work in an abuse and violence-free environment. Respect for both men and women at workplaces needs to be developed in everyone.
- ◆ Boys need to give up and prevent eve teasing and stalking, which affect women's dignity and right to safe movement, and girls need to strongly protest against these nefarious practices.
- ◆ Women's safety and security in public spaces is a collective social responsibility. Bruta activities like rapes and gang rapes, acid throwing need to be condemned openly. Boys and girls need to be alerted against such heinous practices right from their adolescence.
- ◆ Men and women need to share equal space in this world. Tolerance and respect need to be inculcated among boys and men throughout their socialization process to create a violence-free world for women.
- ◆ Verbal sanitization needs to be promoted through the socialisation process. Gendered language and sexist language at all spheres of life need to be avoided.
- ◆ Women have equal right with men over family's property. Both are creators of property; so, both should own and use property in an equal manner.

Finally, we can close this module with a note that “An equal world is a better world.”

### **Reading List**

#### **Must Reads:**

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**Suggested Readings:**

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8. Hindustan Times (2020) Status of Women in India report, January 14
9. ICRW (2004) Violence against Women in India: A Review of Trends, Practices and Responses, Prepared by International Center for Research on Women for UNFPA
10. ILO(2010) Women in labour markets: Measuring progress and identifying challenges, International Labour Office, Geneva

11. International Labour Organization (2018) “India Wage Report, Wage policies for decent work and inclusive growth
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13. Mitra, Arup and Aya Okada (2018) Labour Market Participation in India: A Region- and Gender-Specific Study, Springer Singapore
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## MODEL QUESTIONS FOR ETHICS AND VALUES PAPER

### Group – A

**Write down the answers in one word or one sentence each. Each question carries 1 (one) mark.**

1. What is the basic aim of education?
2. What type of education is ethics and values?
3. What does moral education promote?
4. Mention any factor which you feel is responsible for the degradation of values in society?
5. Write down one objective of ethics and value education.
6. Define social progress.
7. How is gender equality related to human development?
8. Write down Gandhiji's version on women's education.
9. What is the basic motto of “social progress”?
10. What are the stages a woman passes through in her lifecycle?
11. Mention any factor that amounts to bring gender inequality in society?
12. Write down a desirable gender related value you have imbibed from your study of the module on “Issues related to women”?
13. What is pre-natal sex selection?
14. How does pre-natal sex selection affect women?
15. Define the concept of “Parayadhan”.
16. Mention the districts of Odisha that have low female sex ratio?
17. What is PCPNDT?
18. What lesson does the Devan story indicate to you?
19. Which right of a girl is violated when we kill her as a foetus in the mother's womb?

20. Mention a gender bias you see around you in your family?
21. State the ethical concerns you find in gender bias?
22. Suggest a measure that you feel appropriate to change family's attitude towards girls?
23. In which year the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizen's Act was passed in India?
24. Write down the basic rights the daughters need to enjoy in a family according to you?
25. Mention a way in which you can keep your grandparents happy.
26. Mention a change in the practice against widows you desire in the society.
27. Is gender-based division of labour a healthy practice?
28. Why it is a need to recognise women's domestic labour?
29. How can we liberate women from their care functions?
30. What you feel needs priority to provide women a safe work space?
31. Which function makes women unique?
32. Define gender justice.
33. As a child how can you give justice to your mother's work?
34. How can you do away with the culture of violence against women?
35. What was the traditional method of giving consent or exercising choice in marriage among the royal families called?
36. Which article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights talks about the free and full consent of the intending spouse?
37. What is the opposite of free consent in marriage? Do you feel it is acceptable to you?

38. Spell out a reason for which many Indian families go for marriage without the consent of the girls.
39. How does the U.K. Home Office, Report, 2017 describe the forced marriage situation of India?
40. How forced marriage is forbidden in the Quran?
41. Which human right does forced marriage or marriage without consent violate?
42. Mention an Act that prevents forced marriage in India.
43. What is honour killing?
44. In which states of India honour killing is more prevalent?
45. Mention a reason for which you feel child marriage is not ethically sound.
46. According to you which articles of the Indian Constitution is violated by the practice of child marriage?
47. Which gender group becomes a higher victim of marriage without consent?
48. Give a reason for which you feel that child marriage is anti-human in character?
49. Suggest a measure to change a community's attitude to give preference to consent over customary laws.
50. State the minimum age of marriage prescribed for boys and girls in India.
51. What can you do to put an end to child marriage in your family?
52. In which state of India mass child marriage takes lace on the day of Akshaya Tritiya?
53. What ideal the Bal Mitra Gram project of Kailash Satyarthi's Foundation was trying to promote among the children in the state of Rajasthan?

54. Who was the child iconic ambassador of this Bal Mitra Programme in Rajasthan?
55. Mention the child rights violated through child marriage?
56. Bring out a major differentiation between the concept of dowry as prevalent earlier and today.
57. What was the justification for giving “Streedhan”?
58. What is the present conversion of the concept of “Streedhan”?
59. Write a major consequences of dowry practice on gender equality.
60. What is the amount given by the groom to the bride's side is called under Islamic tradition?
61. Define dower.
62. In which year the Dowry prevention Act came into force in our country?
63. Suggest a changed value to end dowry.
64. Write the nature of family violence you find to be very common in your surroundings.
65. Mention the name of a state that has launched safe houses for girls to save them from honour killing.
66. What is femicide?
67. Point out a form of femicide.
68. Give your idea about which value femicide violates.
69. As a young citizen what action you can take up to end femicide coming to your notice.
70. What is the corelation between gender equality and domestic violence.
71. What value promotes domestic violence/
72. What change in value you can suggest to put an end to domestic violence?

73. Mention the types of domestic violence.
74. Among which community Female Genital Mutilation is common?
75. What are the ethical concerns you see in Female Genital Mutilation?
76. During the World War -II which type of domestic violence was undertaken in large measures?
77. How does family violence according to you is against desirable gender values ? Give a single reason.
78. How gender equality is violated in case of STEM Education/
79. What does STEM stand for?
80. What can you do to ensure freedom of choice to your female counterparts?
81. Write down a safety issue a woman faces at her work place?
82. How does workplace bring gender discrimination?
83. Mention the way you can honour women's contribution at home?
84. What makes women's work invisible?
85. Give an example of gender stereotyping at work.
86. What does Mamata Sahu's story teach you?
87. Recommend a means to end gender stereotyping at work.
88. Define glass ceiling.
89. How is glass ceiling against the values of gender equality?
90. Name a woman whom you feel has broken the glass ceiling.
91. Which is recognised as the first Women's Rights Movement of the world?
92. What is CEDAW.
93. Mention the world-wide movement that brought harassment of women at workplace to social media exposure.

94. Suggest a gender value you cherish to be introduced to reduce role conflict among women.
95. Give one examples of gendered language.
96. Give one example of sexist language that you have studied.
97. In which year the Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act was passed in Indian Parliament?
98. What values we need to imbibe to make the society a safe place for our women?
99. What word we can use in place of 'Mankind' to make it gender neutral?
100. How can we replace the word " FIREMAN" to make it gender neutral?

## GROUP – B

**Answer the following questions within 50 words. Each question carries 2 (two) mark.**

1. Explain the key objectives of value education.
2. Mention few desirable gender values we need to have.
3. Write down in what way gender values can change the face of our society.
4. Elaborate how gender equality can ensure social progress?
5. How do you correlate gender justice as the key to economic progress?
6. What do you mean by life cycle approach to study women's issues?
7. Explain Gender equality with an example from your classroom practice.
8. What are the common gender discriminations you observe in your families?
9. Why do parents go for sex selection and how it violates gender ethics?
10. What lessons does the Devan village story teach you?
11. What does PCPNDT Act aim at?
12. What can you do to keep your elderly parents happy?
13. What does the maintenance and welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act provide for?
14. Examine the factors that deter women's position in the society.
15. What are the restrictions on the widows in our society? Do they confirm to the desirable gender values?
16. Give two messages to change the attitudes towards the widows.
17. What is 'double burden' of women?

18. Why is women's work not taken into account in the National GDP Account?
19. Do you think women's work should be counted in our GDP?
20. Who is undervalued in marriage negotiations? Give your own view on how you can change this in your own life.
21. What is consent in marriage?
22. Why are forced marriages undertaken and how can you prevent them at your level?
23. What does the Holy Quran say about consent in marriages?
24. Do you think consent in marriage should be fundamental? Which High Court has declared such a progressive step?
25. How does child marriage defy the child rights?
26. How you young boys and girls can motivate members of your local community to give up the practices of child marriage?
27. What is Sarada Act?
28. What was Dowry in past days?
29. Mention two emerging features of dowry.
30. Mention the values we are violating through gender violence.
31. What changes in attitude and practices you can suggest to make our homes violence free for women?
32. What is your reaction against Dowry deaths?
33. In what way glass ceiling violates women's rights to work?
34. What are safe houses for women and which states have launched these houses?
35. What is forced sterilization and what ethical issues you see in it?
36. What measures can be taken at the family level according to you to increase girls' representation in STEM.
37. Who become more victimised by child marriage and why?



38. Give two strong suggestions to end gender discrimination at workplaces, particularly in the unorganised sector.
39. What is “Me too” Movement?
40. What is Witch craft induced murder?
41. What is body shaming? What you have marked people doing to inflict body shaming?
42. How body shaming is bad for both girls and boys?
43. How can you stop body shaming among your friends?
44. Why is gender sensitive language needed?
45. What is verbal sanitation?
46. What does the recent Hindu Succession Amendment Act say about women's rights?
47. Mention your reaction against the unpaid care work of women.
48. What can we do to bring more women to the employment market?
49. What values we can change to make the society a gender equal society?
50. Mention two key take away from the module you have studied.

## GROUP – C

**Write down the answers within 250 words. Each question carries 5 (five) mark.**

1. Discuss the need of moral education in our system of education.
2. Describe the factors that contribute for the moral degradation of the present society.
3. Explain the benefits of ethics and value education felt by you.
4. Give an overview of gender situation of our society.
5. Why do you feel gender equality is a need for social and economic progress of a society?
6. What is a life cycle approach and how gender related values are defeated for women within it?
7. What is pre-natal sex selection and why it is practised among parents?
8. Explain how pre-natal sex selection violates human rights of a female foetus?
9. What lessons have you learnt from the Devan story?
10. Give some experiences of yours to describe the father's supremacy in your family.
11. Elaborate the concept of Gender Justice with examples from your surroundings.
12. Give your views about five ways in which we can change some negative gender practices in current from our families.
13. What is gendered based socialisation? What can we do to change it?
14. How do you look at gender division of labour within a family?
15. Which practices of marriage generate ethical issues before you?

16. Explain how child marriage denies rights to a girl.
17. Examine the role of seeking consent from both boys and girls for marriage as a precursor to desirable gender values.
18. Why do you think women's work in the family is invisible?
19. What does Payal's efforts teach you?
20. What is the broad learning of yours relating to the discussions on gender practices in the families?
21. What is the current plight of majority of the elders in our society? What can we do to make their lives happy?
22. What difference we bring between work and employment? How can we overcome that to recognise women's contributions?
23. What is care work and how important it is in our lives?
24. Differentiate between visible and invisible work with examples.
25. What will be your role to bring transformations in your families to allow your mothers to go for paid work?
26. If your mothers are working, how can you reduce their role conflict?
27. What do you mean by a "culture of silence"? Why does this happen?
28. What is marriage by consent?
29. How important is right to consent for women in marriages?
30. What do you mean by a forced marriage?
31. What is the meaning of a child marriage? Why is this a very bad practice?
32. What is Dowry? Give your own views on this practice.
33. How does Dowry contribute to child marriages?
34. How does Dowry contribute to increased violence in our families?

35. What are the steps taken by our state to prohibit Dowry?
36. What is honour killing? How can you stop it?
37. What is FGM? Justify how it is a barbaric practice.
38. What are the issues women face in the workplace? How can they be eradicated?
39. What is gender stereotyping at work place? Is there a strong logic behind it?
40. Why do women find it hard to reach the top positions in the professional hierarchy?
41. What is Gender pay gap? How it is against gender equality norms?
42. What is Sexual Harassment at work place and what are its forms?
43. What is role conflict?
44. What lessons you got to know from the discussions on the present practices at workplace with regard to women and men?
45. As youngsters how do you look at violence against women in the public space?
46. Give an account of the role of SEWA in ensuring rights to the marginalised women.
47. Write the story of a girl from your state who has broken the gender stereotype.
48. “Women need to have equal property rights with their male counterparts.” Comment.
49. Give an account of the role of sexist language in devaluing a particular gender group.
50. Mention five good gender related values you learnt from the module taught to you.

