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Gender – A Social Issue

Lesson Plan

Contents

- ▶ An overview of gender issues and sensitisation
- ▶ Understanding what constitutes gender, gender equality and gender sensitisation

Objectives

- ▶ To understand that gender is not about biological issues—it is about social and cultural issues
- ▶ To learn about what are stereotypes and what is equality
- ▶ To know about differences that are real and those that are imposed socially and culturally
- ▶ To appreciate the differences and the equalities and inequalities between men and women

■ Teacher's Aids

- ▶ Globe
- ▶ Pictures, charts, atlas and newspapers, magazines, etc.
- ▶ Blackboard
- ▶ Internet

■ Tips for Teacher

- ▶ Explain that gender issues are not just about biological differences—they are about social and cultural perceptions and roles imposed by those perceptions.
- ▶ Talk about stereotypes and the need to break away from them—boys should take a hand in household chores, and girls can wash the motorbike or car—start with small issues and build up to larger ones.
- ▶ Give examples—like the girls and women of Haryana breaking out of the patriarchal mould and doing well in sports, aeronautics and beauty pageants; women driving trucks and taxis; men as designers and chefs across the world, and some staying home while their wives work, etc.
- ▶ Talk about the third gender and their problems of being accepted in society, despite laws in their favour—the problems of social acceptance, studying and being employed.

- ▶ Be sensitive and alert to the fact that there may be students who have gender-related problems and psychological issues in the class—not to be judgemental and sarcastic or mocking in your attitude.
- ▶ Students should be encouraged to know the need for creating a climate of social and cultural equality regarding gender issues.

■ Background and Reading

- ▶ Read the lesson aloud and explain, sharing the aids, etc., pausing to examine and explain the data in the boxes.
- ▶ Particularly focus on the issues created by patriarchal mind-sets and prejudices of all kinds—while respecting certain cultural boundaries.
- ▶ Remember the important thing is carrying one’s responsibilities but also exercising the freedom of choice. The important thing is choice not in performing chores but in selecting one’s life path.

What is Gender

- ▶ **Biologically two genders:** male and female—but gender does not refer to that—it is about social and cultural attributes, roles and responsibilities associated with a male and female.
- ▶ Gender—determined culturally—it is a social concept that can change with time or with change of culture/place.
- ▶ Examples: Girls prefer jewellery, clothes, dolls; boys like sports and games—not always true.
- ▶ Gender roles, responsibilities and differences are not the same in all societies—Differences in dresses and games/toys, the way we talk and sit and move, the way we behave at home and in public, the work we do at home and outside, the subjects we choose to study, etc. In some places, even food is given first to the boys, while the girls eat what is leftover.
- ▶ Different capabilities and talents are not always based on gender—a boy can be a musician or dancer while a girl may be a boxer or pilot.
- ▶ Gender differences are considered ‘natural’ and that creates inequality of treatment—women treated as a weaker section of society because of mind-set—at the same time the vulnerability of children of both sexes and of girls and women should also be kept in mind in view of safety concerns—not regarding opportunities.

Gender Inequality

- ▶ This dates back to the prehistoric times—men were hunters, women looked after the children and cooked.
- ▶ Also stereotyping now—girls to do typing, housekeeping jobs while men do the more ‘difficult’ jobs outside the house.

Inequality in Family

- ▶ Children adopt stereotypes—men should not cook, wash, sing, dance, design, etc.
- ▶ This causes unhappiness in family—parents give importance to boys, not girls—gender roles are drilled into the children.
- ▶ Parents try to determine gender of foetus before birth—banned in India—declared illegal because it is causing female infanticide which has skewed the sex ratio.
- ▶ Percentage of girls getting primary education is lower than boys—school dropout rate for girls higher by 30%—not educating girls—but secondary school results show girls do well if not better than boys.
- ▶ In public—often separate queues for women.

Steps Taken by the Government of India

- ▶ Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution—guarantees equal pay for equal work.
- ▶ Inheritance law—son and daughter get equal share in property.
- ▶ Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan—ensures elementary education to children between 6-14 years—also focus on girls and children with special needs.

Government's Efforts to Remove Inequality—Changing Scenario

- ▶ 19th century—reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasager, Swami Dayananda Saraswati—fought for upliftment of women—Dayananda Saraswati opened many schools and colleges for girls and women.
- ▶ Constitution provides equal opportunities for women in all fields.
- ▶ Government taking steps to stop violence or harassment of women at verbal, sexual, economic and emotional levels—we as citizens must also support government efforts and change our mind-set to improve position.

Assessment Corner

Oral Assignment

- Ask for answers at random from the students. Confirm the right answers. Let them write down the correct answers if they like in their books.

Written Assignment

- The teacher has two options—(i) Either do these exercises orally first and then ask the students to write them down. OR (ii) Ask the students to write the answers on their own. Then the teacher can announce the correct answers to the students and they can ask their partners to cross-check them.

In either case, the answers can be written as homework and the teacher can check them in the class.

Think Tank

- F. **HOTS questions:** Discuss the two questions in class and let the students write the answers to F and G as homework. Teacher should assess individual work.