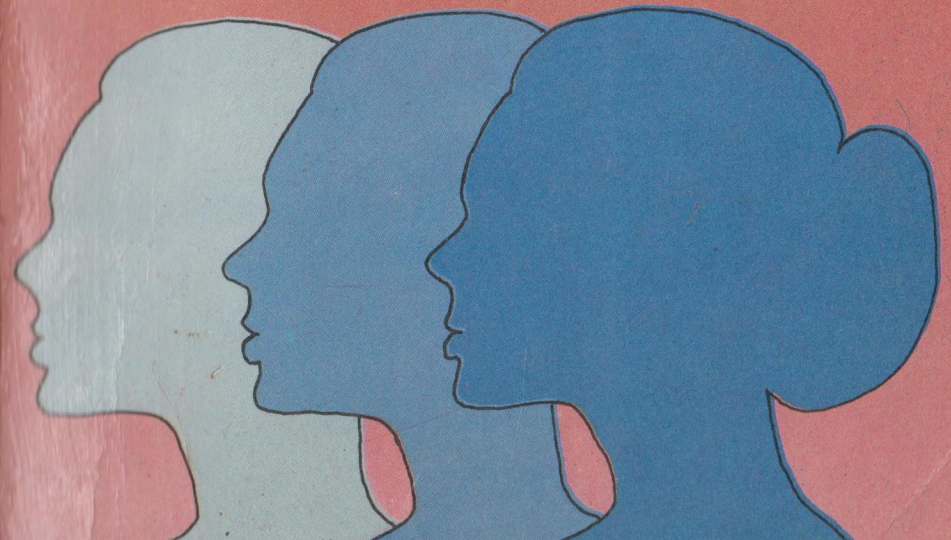


Image of Women and Curriculum in Mother-tongue

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Image of Women

and

**Curriculum in
Mother Tongue**

IMAGE OF WOMEN

and

**CURRICULUM IN
MOTHER TONGUE**

Dr Indira Kulshreshtha
Project Director and Editor

Department of Women's Studies

**National Council of Educational
Research and Training**

NEW DELHI

March 1991
Phalgun 1912

DWS. 5. T. I. K.

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FOREWORD

Time and again it has been emphasised by philosophers, social scientists and literateurs that a woman is not only a wife or a mother, but also a human being. She is an individual in her own right. She occupies an important place in society. However, it still remains a distant dream for her to achieve equal status in the man-dominated society.

The traditional values have changed with time. Questions of equality, empowerment, independence, self-esteem and social recognition of women have popped up in the form of a challenge to all of us. Education is the best medium for inculcating the changing values in children. The moment we talk about education, we are reminded of the school, the teacher, and the textual material. The responsibilities of teachers of mother-tongue are far more greater than those of teachers of a second language.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been bringing out handbooks and guides for teachers and authors from time to time. Education for equality of women is an important aspect of the National Policy on Education 1986. The present book has been written with a view to enabling teachers face these challenges with confidence. I believe that values can be taught in a more effective manner through the mother-tongue. It is hoped that writers of textual material in all languages will be benefited with the contents of this book.

This book is an outcome of the combined efforts of many educationists and creative writers. I would like to place on record my appreciation of their contributions.

This project was conceived, planned, initiated and successfully completed by Dr. (Ms) Indira Kulshreshtha, Reader in Women's Studies Unit of the NCERT. She is also the Project Director and Editor of this book. I congratulate her on this important and useful work.

We shall welcome reactions and comments from all quarters.

Dr. K. Gopalan
Director
National Council of Educational
Research and Training

October 6, 1989

Editorial Note

The literature that the school children are exposed to, cannot be deemed as merely an instrument for improving their reading, their written expression, their general knowledge or information. Instead, it defines values and realities to a great extent. I believe that reading content can be used as an effective means for bringing about attitudinal change in children.

Under the present educational system in India, both boys and girls are expected to receive equal opportunities for achieving the heights. Their education, however, reflects the roles the society ultimately intends them to achieve. In this set up the male, rather than the female is taught to achieve, to advance, and to create. This difference is particularly evident in textual material used by children almost at all levels.

In recent years these books—textbooks, supplementary readers and children's literature have gained a lot in appearance, and in social interest. Now the printing is good, illustrations are sometimes excellent, the themes are varied and the racial and social backgrounds reflected in these books have begun to expand beyond the middle class urban family units. Unfortunately, whereas other biases—like those of caste and creed—are disappearing, sexist biases are not. The school textbooks and other material is still a potent means of perpetuating stereotyped images of women as well as the anti-feminine prejudices. This fact has been confirmed through the evaluation of about 500 such books in English and Indian languages conducted under the research project on 'Identification of areas of Bias in Language Material'. Such discrimination is evident in textual material in their thematic and linguistic content as also in presentation of material. It was felt that the textual material needs to be recast with a view to incorporating values commensurate with equality and empowerment of women.

The present book was planned with a view to developing such

alternative literature for children and the work was accomplished through discussions with a group of experts during a workshop organised by the Women's Studies Unit at Indian Institute of Education, Pune.

It is the result of combined efforts of all of us. I am grateful to Prof. Rama Singh, Ms. Nirmala Thakur, Ms. Shashi Sharma, Shri Jagmohan Singh, Ms. Mira Dave, Dr. S.P. Upadhyaya, Ms. Bhavana Bhargave, Shri Ashok Kumar Mathur, Ms. B. Sarojana and Shri K. Kankiah for their co-operation in achieving this goal.

Special thanks are due to Principal, Dayawati Modi Academy, Modipuram; Director, All India Radio, Allahabad; Director, SIERT, Udaipur, Principal, SIE, Allahabad, Director, SCERT, Hyderabad (A.P) and the Principal, Kakatiya Govt. College, Warrangal (A.P.) for deputing their experts for the said programme.

I would also like to thank Dr. Chitra Naik, Director, Indian Institute of Education, Pune for providing us with the beautiful campus surroundings and also for making the hostel facilities available to all of us.

Thanks are due to Prof(Retd) Sarojini Bisaria, Prof C.J. Daswani, the then Head, WSU, and Prof. Usha Nayar, present Head of the Unit for their kind cooperation in this venture.

Last, but not the lest, I am grateful to all those who have directly or indirectly been involved in this activity and have provided me with their help from to time.

If this book, proves to be of some help to the teachers of mothertongue and authors of textual material in mother-tongue, I shall feel that our efforts have been worthwhile.

Comments from all will be welcome.

Indira Kulshreshtha

December, 1989

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—K. Kankiah

The New Woman

— Subramania Bharathi
(1882 - 1921)

Hail Oh New Woman, 'I adore you
Thousand and one time I sing victory to you'
Like a pink lotus in a muddy pond
You appear in this land of Bharath;
With your golden trumpet announcing liberation
Which cast away the evils and miseries,
Of future queen: Hail to you
It is the fruit of our fore-father's penance -
"Women have freedom, they are free...."

"Hail to you, the future girl
They are fools: who enslave fellow human beings
Humans are born to enlighten themselves by
righteousness that ascends to divinity
The scroll of drudgery that binds the girl with
endless chores of a household should be
thrown into fire to be burnt.

Oh folks, do you hear these new words
her lips utter ?
If men and women are considered equals,
the knowledge spreading and power gained,
This world would prosper.
It is the Mother Shakti, who has come down
in the garb of a New Woman.

She declares that modesty and frailty
should go with the dogs....

"Could a mother with shakeles of bondage
and ignorance
Give birth to heroes and wise men
to glorify the land ?
It is cruel to enforce it
with slavery and drudgery
Do you hear these words, folks ?"

"These women never turn back in life.
Spit away the life doomed in
ignorance and obscurantism !"

Those are not the virtues for a right
woman" Thus speaks the deamsel of dawn of
this modern age,
Do you hear folks ?
To excell in skills and careers of wordly life,
To study and learn all the tresures of literature
and art"

"We the women of Bharatha
Would strive forth.
We would demolish all the age-
old follies which are none
But lies....."

"We would cut assunder all
the foolish bondages.
We would cherish all
the good deeds that
Enliven mankind to the glory divine,
We would live to be adored by men..."

Folks, do you hear this young
maiden's voice ?

Hail and Sing Victory
I Adore You, New Woman !

Chapter I

Let us Make it 'You' and 'Me'

Indira Kulshreshtha

Translated by:
Rajyam Krishnan

Let us Make it 'You' and 'Me'

The role of Indian woman has been full of contradictions so far as the customs and traditions are concerned. On the one hand people are never tired of praising the Vedic age, and they feel pride in referring to the names of women, who have been intellectuals like Gargi and Maitrayee, while on the other they treat women as the weaker sex, who can be made to serve men with their heart and soul, but who only occupy a second position in the social structure.

The sad state of affairs in this regard was perhaps responsible for drawing the attention of people like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who raised his voice against the existing social evils like child marriage and Sati pratha, and started a revolution for uplifting the status of women. Gradually people became conscious of the dire need to help women acquire equal rights in society. The constitutional provisions were made for equality for all sections of society. The Indian constitution provides that there would be no discrimination on the basis of caste, creed or sex. The directive principles regarding this equality are responsible for the formation of the National Policy on Education 1986¹, which lays stress on equality and empowerment of women. The Programme of Action² details out the measures for taking necessary steps to restore the status of women in India.

At this juncture, one has to pause and think: what is 'equality'? Does it mean that women in India are in some way inferior to men? Is there need to bring them up? Or does it mean that both men and women should change their roles in and outside the home? Or has it arisen out of the Western movement for liberation of women? These are some of the pertinent questions that need to be answered when we talk about the equality of women.

1. Hereafter the National Policy on Education 1986 will be referred to as NPE

2. Hereafter the Programme of Action will be referred to as POA.

In the changed social and political context, and as per demands of the day, there is need for bringing about attitudinal change in the treatment of women. The traditional and stereotyped image of women needs to be replaced by the image of women who are self-reliant, self-directed and self-propelled. The traditional image of women as inferior to men should also be uprooted and consciousness and awareness regarding their rightful status should be generated in society. Since it relates to the directive principles of Policy enshrined in the Indian Constitution, it is obligatory on the part of the government to formulate policies and prepare plans for their implementation. The Government of India has done it through the NPE and the POA; and the latest addition is the National Perspective plan³.

Here one would wonder as to how it concerns the educationists? Normally it would be regarded as a social problem which can only be solved by social reformers. In spite of the constitutional provisions and efforts at the governmental level, things have not improved sufficiently enough to bring satisfaction. Even today woman is made an easy prey of crime and violence and is exposed to all kinds of indignities. Worst of all, she is considered to be a sex-object meant for the pleasure of men, dependent on his mercy. There are innumerable instances of mental violence against women. Wife-battering is prevalent not only among the labour classes, as is often believed, but even in the 'so called' educated middle class. There is oppression and suppression of women within the four walls of the home, and no one can do anything about it, as it becomes a 'family affair'. The woman has to suffer silently.

All this may seem to be beyond the jurisdiction of educationists, but it is very much the concern of all who are in any way related to the welfare of the younger generation - the children, whose tender minds are at their formative stage, and education is certainly one of the most important areas which can bring about the attitudinal change. A climate has to be created to bring in harmony in the lives of children - both boys and girls, so that they may learn to respect each other. And who can do it better than the curric-

3. Hereafter National Perspective Plan will be referred to as NPP.

ulum planners, policy makers, textbook writers, publishers, and above all the teachers, who have the means to do so in the form of a printed book?

A great deal has been said against Indian text-books and related material through the press and the media. The charges are that school going children in India are exposed to material that contains sex-bias, sometimes even derogatory remarks against women, and the textbooks depict women in stereotyped roles.

The challenge was accepted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training⁴, New Delhi at the national level. Both research and development projects were taken up with a view to eradicating sexbias, sex-stereotyped portrayal of women in the textual material and preparing exemplar resource material in languages for bringing about attitudinal change both in the teachers and the taught. The awareness programmes were started as long back as 1979. Incidentally, the NPE '86 has stressed the need for projecting an image of woman, who is self reliant. It also lays stress on reviewing the textual material with a view to eliminating sex-bias and incorporating values commensurate with the status, equality and empowerment of women.

A research project on 'Identification of Areas of Sex-bias in Language Material' was taken up by the author of this chapter in the year 1984. This project was completed in 1985-86. We had tried to evolve evaluative criteria and develop an evaluation tool on the basis of these criteria. The evaluation of textual material in various languages was conducted on two counts: the negative and the positive. The negative count was to locate instances and statements which were prejudicial to the dignity of women, and the positive count was meant for locating the matter promoting harmonious relationship between men and women. The aim of this exercise was to screen the textual material at the school level and ensure that it did not contain references to women which may denigrate their status. It was also emphasised that women in the world

4. Hereafter National Council of Educational Research and Training will be referred to NCERT.

as recommended by the National Seminar⁵ that biographies of women such as freedom fighters, engineers, scientists, explorers, teachers, and many others of the kind should find appropriate place in textual material. Proper emphasis on the role of such women should be laid in the teaching programmes.

The double sets of norms that are maintained in the society may be revealed in the way a 'widow' and a 'widower', 'spinster' and a 'bachelor' is treated in the society. It is, however, necessary that the attitude of society be changed, and both men and women start taking pride in and derive pleasure from domestic work, their individual professions, and the means of earning their livelihood. Leisure time activities, such as games and hobbies, social welfare work or community services should be given due recognition.

The education of girls, i.e. the education of 49% of the total population of the country, is as essential as that of boys. There should be no discrimination in offering them opportunities for professional training. There are certain social evils prevailing in the society, such as dowry, bride-price, prostitution, vulgar display of women's pictures in magazines, posters, advertisements, pamphlets and calendars etc. which need to be rejected. Women are as dignified members of society as men, and no stigma should be attached to their chosen way of life in general, and in particular to spinsterhood, widowhood, divorce and remarriage. Women need not be treated in isolation, but as members of the community and equal partners of men contributing towards human happiness.

Children come to school at the formative stage of their lives. It is here that the foundation is laid for developing healthy attitudes in them towards each other. A class-room can become a real training ground of the development of right attitudes towards household work, professional commitment and leisure time activities. The duty of a teacher is not only to teach skills of reading and writing. It is much more than that. If the teachers have succeeded in providing opportunities for discussions and debates on topics like 'A

5. National Seminar on the Status of Women was organized by the NCERT in collaboration with the A.N.S. Institute of Social Sciences, Patna in 1975.

Happy Home', 'My Mummy, Daddy and I', or 'My Sister/Brother is a Gem' etc., where children can discuss the advantages of home, where the parents work and provide maximum love and care to their children, because all the members of the family share the household chores as well as the work out-side the home, they have succeeded in delivering the message to children.

The teachers are the pivot around whom the children move. They are their guide, their idol and their friend. Whatever they say, is the last word for children. Hence, the responsibility of the teacher is also great. There are many dimensions to their teaching. They are like the gardner who looks after the tender sapplings with affectionate care and when they grow and bloom, he takes pride in them. Greater is the responsibility of the teacher of mother tongue which the child is exposed to as soon as he opens his eyes to look at this enormous world. Children are not bound to the mundane routines of grammer, language-skills, or comprehension questions to understand what the mother wants to tell them or what they themselves want to convey to her. It comes to them naturally. Therefore, the teacher of mother tongue has an advantage over the teacher of the second language.

It is the teacher's task to make children conscious of the noble qualities of women, some of which, contradictorily, make her particularly vulnerable. To quote only one such quality is her propensity for self-sacrifice which makes men take her for granted and exploit her for her emotions. Women sacrifice all within their power for the welfare of their families, and this is the quality that deserves appreciation. The teachers have to make the children conscious of this quality in women, so that when they grow, they are able to appreciate it in women around them, whether they are their mothers, their sisters, their wives, their neighbours or office colleagues. They have to assimilate this fact that women are not second rate citizens.

They have to be provided with equal opportunities in all walks of life, ranging from decisions making to contributing towards the progress of the nation.

Nature treats both men and women alike: both equally feel happiness and sorrow, pleasure and pain, heat and cold, and the multifarious moods and emotions of human existence. Then, why should we try to discriminate one from the other? Let the children learn and sing the song that was composed by a group of 48 women during the Paris Conference at the International Council for Adult Education:

We want you to understand
It's because you are a man
We're bringing this message to you !
.....

You said 'man' and 'he'
But where were 'we' ?
Women, who hold up half the sky ?
.....

We were invisible
We are unheard
And we know why.

You talked of academic developments
They were words, empty words !
Your authenticity was 'he', not 'she',
It was all so tragic and absurd !
.....

In the countries where we are working
We work with women with their
Feet on the ground,
Your words are coming from ivory towers,
In their world you don't make a sound !
.....

Let's make it 'her' and 'she'
And 'you' and 'me',

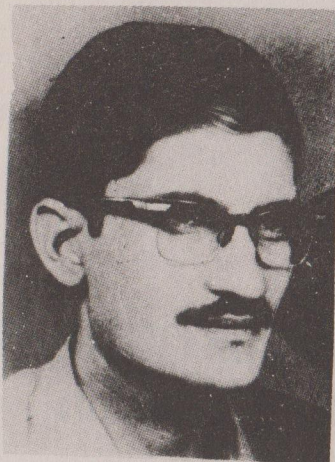
Together we'll hold up half the sky
Let's make it 'her' and 'she',

We'll all be visible,
We'll all be heard,
So let's all try !

Chapter II

**The Need For Change in Attitudes
Through Education**

Ashok Kumar Mathur



Ashok Kumar Mathur

Mr. Mathur has thirty years of experience of English language teaching and 25 years of teacher training. He has contributed in writing textual material for the various classes of Rajasthan Board and also for private publishers. His articles on various subjects have been published in many educational journals both in Hindi and English. At present he is working as Research Officer in the State Institute of Educational Research and Training, Saheli Marg, Udaipur (Rajasthan).

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The Need For Change in Attitudes Through Education

Change in the social, economic, political, and all other areas of human life can be brought through education. Human society is always in a state of flux and various forces are always at work in moulding it. Traditional old values always exert pressure while at the same time new values, both desirable and less desirable, come into being. Not only does education teach us, but it also helps us in adjusting according to the circumstances, it also enables us to evolve new values, which may improve our social norms to make the society an ideal one.

It is necessary to study and analyse the legitimate status of women in society in the present day context. Indian society is a unique melting pot of conflicting traditions, view-points and reactions. People are never tired of praising the enlightened, wise and the learned women of the Vedic age. They evoke the names of those famous women to impress upon us the greatness of our past. But surprisingly, they consider their own women folk as mere chattels for whom all the doors to progress are closed. Instead of getting equal status and recognition, women are made objects of veneration and as such, their role in society is restricted. Rigid norms shake their activity in society. We claim that Gods reside where women are respected (यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते, रमन्ते तत्र देवता) . Such statements, though aimed at honouring women, actually harm them in the long run by alienating them from the mainstream of social activities. In actual practice the rights and duties of women are limited to the daily chores of the household, and looking after the comforts of the family members. We must pause and think: Is this the 'be all and the end all' for women?

Constitutional Provision for Equality of Sexes :

In this age of social and political change, there is a growing demand for improvement in the status of women. This sentiment is reflected in our Constitution, according to which both the sexes are to be treated as equals, and both are to enjoy the same legal

rights. Just as the state does not discriminate between people on the basis of their religion, caste and creed, sex is not to be the basis for any discrimination either. Women will have opportunities equal to men in public employments and there will be no discrimination against them either in appointment or in the working conditions. The Constitution envisages a society based on social, economic and political justice, mutual respect and equality of opportunities to both the sexes.

Is it reasonably sufficient to allude to and make provision for equality in the Constitution, when half the population is denied its social rights? Can this be regarded as a socialistic society where rights are limited only to men? Can any country which does not give equal opportunities to both the sexes be termed as progressive? No country can progress where women, who form half the population, are denied opportunities to participate in national development. Mere enactment of laws and their amendments from time are not enough, if women are not given their rightful place in the society. One of the most effective means for achieving this aim is bringing about attitudinal change through education.

New values can be incorporated in the textual material by way of identifying areas of sex-bias and giving suggestions to the teachers for negating them through exercises, questions, curricular and co-curricular activities. On the occasion of the International Women's Year in 1975, a committee was set up by the Government of India to identify measures for improving the status of women. In that very year a three day National Seminar was organised by the NCERT for identification of values commensurate with the status of women⁵. The participants had identified certain values which are as follows⁶:

1. In the educational system, areas of home-management should be projected as joint responsibility of all the members;

5. Please refer to Chapter I.

6. Dr. Indira Kulshreshtha and Dr. Surja Kumari (editors), *Status of Women through Curriculum* (Secondary/Sr. Sec. Stages); New Delhi; NCERT; 1984; Appendix I.

2. Dignity of labour must find reflection while taking care of the roles performed inside and outside the home;
3. Dependence of girls and women as a traditional value must be rejected, from which it follows that the emphasis has to be laid on equal commitment for work at home and outside by both the sexes;
4. Equality of opportunity in all walks of life must lead to the realization of the responsibility to equal participation in the development of the nation;
5. Women should be able to attain their fulfilment by becoming conscious of their rights and abilities;
6. Decision making process at all levels, from family to society, being shared by both the sexes must be emphasised;
7. Systematic understanding and campaigns against all practices degrading sexes in matrimony eg. dowry and bride price, must be organised;
8. The concept of consumerism leading to women becoming prosperity symbols must be rejected and need based consumption must be emphasised; and
9. Women should not be projected as sex-symbols. Dignity of persons is to be promoted so that women become self-reliant, self-propelled and self-directed instead of being continuously protected.

The Seminar recommended that in the light of these objectives the literature at the school level must be produced with these values being reflected. The specific recommendations made in the Seminar were as follows:

1. Textbooks and supplementary readers in English, Hindi and regional languages at the school stage should be scrutinized from the point of view of the status of women so

as to delete all references that denigrate their status;

2. In the supplementary readers as well in language readers biographies of women in different walks of life, such as freedom fighters, sports women, explorers, statesmen and scientists should be included;
3. The various myths about the subordination of Indian women drawn from images of middle class should be exploded. The reality about the bulk of the women in the Indian country-side should be brought to light;
4. The legal rights of women in different spheres should be emphasised;
5. The contribution of women writers, poets and novelists should be highlighted;
6. All corporate efforts made for raising women's status, suffrage movements and the work of the All India Women's Conference should be highlighted;
7. Care must be taken to see that the main objective of the new status of women is to generate a spirit of cooperation with the other sex and not confrontation. While cooperation, competition and conflict occur in all societies, the conflict between the sexes or between the generations should not be highlighted. These books should also contain a corrective description of all broken homes resulting from hasty divorce, if it has to take place; and
8. Women should be viewed not in isolation, but as part of the total situation.

Thus the Seminar put forth the view that text and supplementary books play a great role in the healthy development of children. It was, therefore, recommended that only those textbooks and supplementary readers should be used in schools which inculcate positive values.

The Education Commission (1964-66) emphasised the co-relation of education with change of viewpoints and attitudes. Education has been instrumental in bringing about social and cultural revolutions.

The NPE 1986, POA and the NPP:

The NPE 1986 stressed that education can bring about a basic change in the status of women. The positive role of women has been emphasised. It says that female literacy should be improved through various programmes. Suitable technical and vocational training should be provided to women. Women can be empowered through developing social consciousness and decision-making abilities. It is necessary to improve the image of women by developing a feeling of self confidence in them. It is desirable to develop the ability of critical thinking in women. Thus, women will be able to take decisions, act accordingly and contribute towards the development of society. Women should have equal opportunities for bringing about social change. They need to be encouraged to become economically independent. The NPP also aims at bringing women in the main stream so far as literacy is concerned by 2000 A.D.

Track Record of the Work done by the NCERT:

I. It has been observed that due to the traditional biases, most of the teachers have not been able to bring home to their students the values that were stated earlier. Hence, the NCERT has brought out the following material for the teachers with a view to helping them realise the aims and objectives pertaining to the status of women:

1. Status of Women through Curriculum (Elementary stage)
2. Status of Women through Curriculum (Secondary/Sr. Secondary Stages)
3. Status of Women through Teaching of Mathematics
4. Image of Women and Curriculum in English.

5. Undoing the Damage

6. Orchestral Harmony

These guides keep in view the values relating to male-female equality on one hand, and subject related goals on the other. They emphasise that the presentation of material should be brought down to the level of children's mental maturity and linguistic ability. Suitable methodology for teaching has also been suggested. The desired goals can be achieved through the teaching of social sciences, languages, science and mathematics. The NCERT had organized a number of workshops and seminars to locate and collect appropriate material from these subjects. The workshops/seminars were attended by policy makers, curriculum framers, subject experts, textbook writers, teachers and other educationists.

II. It was felt that the language textbooks and supplementary readers may be screened with a view to identifying areas of sex-bias. In order to achieve this purpose, evaluative criteria were evolved by a group of experts. An evaluation tool was developed for eliminating sex-bias from language material. This tool was tried out and finalized. Approximately 500 textbooks, supplementary readers and children's books were evaluated. The purpose of this evaluation was neither to reject a book, nor to recommend it, but simply to draw the attention of authorities, authors and teachers towards the discrepancies and their strength. The data-based report of the findings are focussed in "*Orchestral Harmony*"⁷.

The publication "*Image of Women and Curriculum in English*" gives the historical perspective of the portrayal of women in Indian context. It also suggests the ways and means of changing the stereotyped image of women into the one who is self-reliant, confident and self-directed. The projection of this image through language books also contains suggestions regarding the role of educationists who can deliver the message to children in the actual classroom situations. It also contains suggestions for the authors of text-books and supplementary readers in English for improv-

ing the image of women in textual material.

III. The present guide is being prepared for the teachers of mothertongue. It is proposed to identify the social stigma and taboos attached to women, their age-old traditional roles and suggest ways and means to the teachers for rejecting them, and also inculcating new values in children.

The evaluation of present day textbooks in accordance with the criterion of equality between the sexes is just one small but vital step in this direction. It has already been agreed upon that the future textual material should not contain any discriminatory remarks against women. On the contrary, these books should illustrate certain positive values like self-reliance, capacities and capabilities to face situations in life, the feeling of co-operation and the need to provide women with equal opportunities in life. Positive aspects like their contribution in solving their own problems and those of the family should also be illustrated and highlighted.

IV. Several steps have been taken and have also been planned for the future to strengthen the attitude of society towards equality between the two sexes. For instance a collection of short stories by women writers was published by the NCERT. Similarly a collection of short stories entitled "*Women and Life*" written by Ms. Pratibha Nath, has also been published by the NCERT. The Council has another project on preparation of supplementary readers from the view point of status of women. Under this scheme three books are under print. these are: "*Annine Besant*", a biography by Ms. Shanti Mehrotra; "*Begum Hazrat Mahal*", an epic-poem by Dr. (Ms.) Rama Singh, and a prose narrative entitled "*Dahaj Davanal*", written by Dr. (Ms.) Usha Goela. Another series on the theme "*Women in the World of Work*" is in the offing.

V. There is another important project taken up by the Women's Studies Unit on the Development of Exemplar Material in Languages.⁸ The lessons prepared in English have been finalized. After this there is plan to develop material in mother-tongue as well.

8. Dr. Indira Kulshreshtha (ed) *Exemplar Material in English*; 1991

7. Dr Indira Kulshreshtha "*Orchestral Harmony*" New Delhi, NCERT; 1991.

VI. The Council also proposes to bring out a series of small books on the Portrayal of Women in Indian Literature, and some manuscripts are under the process of being finalised.

VII. The Women's Studies Unit also proposes to get a package of audio cassetts and video films prepared on the equality and empowered of women. These will be prepared keeping in view the school children.

VIII. Three Orientation programmes were conducted during 1984-85 in Shillong, Bangalore and Almora to bring in the awareness of the need and importance of equality for women. An effort was also made to train 65 key persons from different parts of the country in identifying areas of sex-bias on the basis of the evaluative criteria and the evaluation tool. In addition to this, another group of 55 resource persons was trained by the NCERT, for the states of Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

It is not an easy job to make such basic changes in the curriculum and bring about attitudinal change in people. It is a difficult path to tread. It is a long and difficult process. Educationists will have to create such atmosphere in schools that may foster this attitude of equality. The subject teachers can make a cooperative and individual effort to this, especially teachers of mothertongue have an important role to play because it is easier to foster desired attitudes through the medium of child's mothertongue. The teachers in the classroom, particularly the teachers of mother tongue, can play a very important role in helping the young minds change their attitudes and imbibe new values.

Chapter - III

The Old and the New

(A) Conservative Traditions and Orthodox Beliefs

Rama Singh



Dr. Rama Singh

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(A) Conservative Traditions and Orthodox Beliefs

On my return from early morning walk one day I noticed that in the adjacent house, where a middle class family lived, a drum was being beaten. Many women with smiles on their faces were going there. I became curious. I went there and asked, "What is this merriment about?"

A son was born, I was told.

A few months ago a daughter was born in the same family. I learnt of it months later. I also learnt that the event passed without any ceremony. This gave me a shock. I felt unhappy at the disparity. But that very week I was invited to attend 'Chhathi' ceremony of the newly born child. Being a close neighbour I joined the ceremony. The priest came and offered oblations. Then refreshments were served. In contrast to this, the daughter's birth was marked neither by a ceremony, nor by the drum beating. None was curious to see her. In creation of both the children nature had made no difference. Their bodies were equally soft; there was tenderness on the lips of both; the eyes of both had such innocent looks as would attract every heart. But what an irony that soon after birth one became the centre of attraction and other of neglect and contempt.

What prevented the parents from celebrating their daughter's birthday? It was not because of their limited budget or lack of time. It is the discriminatory attitude of the parents that creates difference between a son and a daughter. The result is that right from the very beginning a son develops a feeling of superiority.

I was attending a seminar, One of the participants, who came from Gujarat, appeared to be depressed. During the tea break I talked to her, and asked her what the reason was. First she tried to evade my question, but she could not do so for long. She told me that just a few days back there was the 'Mundan' ceremony of her nephew. What she saw there, made her sad. She had joined the ceremony with other members of her family. Accompanied by

the musical instruments and singing happily they went to the temple, and offered prayers to their venerated deity. A *Yajna* was performed. Grandfather, grandmother, father, mother and sons made offerings to the *Yajna* fire every time the priest said '*swaha*'. The boy's sister was also seated besides the grandparents. She insisted on joining the others. "Grandma, I will also offer *ahuti*. Grandpa, I will also perform *havan*"

But her grandparents showed indifference by turning their heads away. When she insisted, she was asked to offer '*ahuti*' later on. For the '*Purna-ahuti*' every one stood up but the girl was not allowed to offer '*ahuti*'. She started weeping. She was scolded, and finally given sweets, and thus was silenced.

This was the scene that had depressed my friend. She told me that no one present there had tried to understand the feelings of that small girl. Her request to make the child feel happy and satisfied was also turned down. Her anger and depression might be an isolated event, but probably all of us will feel compelled to think and ask: "Why this ceremony only for the son? Why not for the daughter as well?" This type of discrimination is so subtle that our minds are inclined to accept it naturally and never consider it irrational. In certain families daughters also have '*mundan*' ceremony, but majority of them do not hold festivities, have no excitement, and there is no drum-beating. On some auspicious day a barber is summoned at home and he shaves the head of the girl. There is neither any special gift, nor folk songs, nor refreshments. Such is the way a daughter's '*mundan*' ceremony is performed.

Similarly, there is another ceremony, known as *Yajnapaveet*. We know that this ceremony is exclusively for boys, and not for girls. There is no intention here to suggest that a new system of ceremonies be developed and the girls also be included in it. What is worth noting and agreeing to is that these customs that have come down to us as part of tradition and are celebrated with enthusiasm, are playing an undesirable role of increasing discrimination and perpetuating bias in society. Such ceremonies develop a sense of superiority in boys and generate feelings of inferiority complex and insecurity among the girls. Parents pass on these customs and

ceremonies to their children. Thus a vicious circle, like a cruel wheel of nature, moves on uninterrupted. No one knows when it will cease and whose strong hands would succeed in stopping this cruel wheel. How shall we get the right insight to break away with such harmful traditions? We do not have the least intention to abandon our cultural heritage. What we strongly feel is that the rituals that increase inequality need to be given up. Time demands it. It is easy to repel foreign invasion, because the danger is visible, but the wide spread bias against women is a hidden danger to the society.

The first unit of social structure is the family. The whole social system is based on it. It is in this unit the inequality between son and daughter is implanted since birth, then this parasite plant (*cuscuta reflexa*) will cover the entire social tree, and weaken its power to develop and grow. A mother has to suffer contempt for giving birth to a daughter. A black spot of blemish is put on her forehead, in some places openly and at others through silent glances. Her inferiority will be underlined in various ways. Birth of one daughter is somehow tolerated, if another daughter is born, it is deemed to be a tragedy. If per chance a third daughter is born, it is supposed to be a complete disaster. Such an unpleasant atmosphere is created that the mother, though brimming with affection, feels guilty and criminal. Nature gives tenderness and sweetness to girls which make others happy, yet they are made the targets of taunts and tortures. Their abilities and life force is so circumscribed that it becomes impossible for them to go on. Constant reproach makes them despondent and thus mars the prospect of their future growth. This is not the story of one or two families, it is a tragic story of numerous families of India.

Not only on ceremonial occasions but in daily life also, bias and discrimination are practised. For instance in many families there is a system that the men folk will have their meals first and then the women. There is none to see if the food for women is sufficient or not. If at meal time the head of the family brings with him some friends, then they are also served meals. If this happens, food is bound to be insufficient and women eat whatever is left and may even go without a meal. They do not feel like cooking more food for themselves alone. They think that only the left

over is their share. How much nourishing food they get is easy to guess. Though women themselves have developed this mental attitude, yet the whole society is to blame for it.

Sex-bias is rampant in every section of society and in every walk of life. It is prejudicing both our religious and intellectual perceptions. Genetic engineering has developed a scientific process for detecting the sex of a child at the pre-natal stage. This has resulted into illegal abortions of the female embryo. How cruel it is that those who are going to be the parents of a daughter are killing their own offspring by playing such an inhuman game for the sake of a false male pride in the family ?

All these instances of discrimination between men and women created by rigidity or bias are discernible in different contexts. In many places mothers fast and pray for the well-being of their sons on occasion like *Ahoi* and *Sakat-Chowth*. Women do so with great devotion and reverence. In these observances there is a feeling of making sacrifice for the well-being of children. It may seem to be irrational but they reflect a mother's love for her children. Narrow and biased attitudes have over the centuries created the impression that the mother prays for the welfare and longevity of her sons alone. Can there be a mother who does not have good wishes for her daughters also ? Her blessings provide protection to both. She loves all her children and desires to see them healthy, happy and wishes them long life. But the customs of fasting for sons only and not for daughters tarnish her image of being equally affectionate to all her children. In many places and families there are different ways of stigmatising a woman. Widowhood restricts a woman from participation in social ceremonies and auspicious occasions. It has become customary not to allow her to have any mark on her forehead or to use vermilion and wear bangles. In some places this is observed so strictly and such cruelty that words like culture and humanity lose their relevance.

In a particular community in Andhra Pradesh a widow is treated cruelly after her husband's death. After ten days of his death, she is subjected to a custom known as *Karma*. She is first decorated and then taken to the cremation ground where turmeric is applied

to her body; *bindi* is put on her forehead. Then the crowd takes her to a tank. There her vermilion and *bindi* are removed and her bangles broken. She is then made to have a bath in the tank and wear a white saree. At that time it is announced that none should see the face of this widow. So all the people cover their faces with cloth and thus keep her out of their sight. She is taken home and is kept in a dark room. She is considered to be a symbol of bad omen. To meet or see her is considered to be inauspicious. To avoid this inauspiciousness a method has been devised. One can keep some molasses jaggery in hand and meet her. In auspicious functions such as a marriage she is always regarded as an unwanted person. Daily meeting with her is prohibited. This orthodox society has adopted the system of meeting her on Tuesdays and Fridays only and that too with molasses. It is a matter of great concern that this kind of irrationality and superstitions are prevalent even today. Nature has already been cruel to her by taking her husband away from her. The loss of her husband which can never be made up is gradually affecting her life and personality. Over and above this, she is subjected to public humiliation. Such social injustices, will naturally lead every sensitive heart to revolt.

In Bengal the condition of widows is worse. After the husband's death her vermilion, *bindi* and bangles are taken away. Her head is also shaved off. Fish and meat eating is prohibited for her irrespective of her age. Numerous writers and poets have written against such customs. Many social workers started movements to fight these absurdities. Countless ordinary persons made efforts to introduce reform in their own families and in those of their neighbours. Their efforts did emanate and spread some rays of light and hope. But these cruel customs are still deep rooted in many communities. Whatever reforms these social workers, thinkers and writers succeeded in bringing about, could not produce the desired effect because of phenomenal increase in population and wide-spread orthodoxy. For complete awakening of women and for producing a balanced society without sex bias, many processes will have to be initiated.

To put up a fight against orthodoxy, the forces of society will have to unite and organise resistance against cruel social customs.

In this fight teachers have special role to play. They will impress upon the minds of the children the hollowness and cruelty of orthodox customs and their absolute irrelevance to present day life and make them aware of the need for providing the right status to women in modern society. These teachers should not think that their duty ends with their helping the students to learn the letters or various alphabets. They will have to explain through various references in the textbooks the power of women and cite examples of their active participation in the society to negate the concept of discrimination between men and women. Guardians can also help in inculcating the idea of equality of sexes by providing equal opportunities to sons and daughters in the minds of children, who are endeavouring to develop their personalities. The impact of these efforts will become deeper when these will be followed up in discussions on how to eliminate inequality between women and men during the meetings of teachers and guardians.

(b) Improving the Status of Women through Identified Values

Nirmala Thakur



Mrs. Nirmala Thakur

Mrs. Nirmala Thakur is the producer of Women and Children's programmes in the All India Radio, Allahabad. She is also a poet of repute. She very strongly feels about the equality of opportunity for women and her thoughts are reflected through the programmes she produces for the Akashwani.

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Improving the Status of Women through Identified Values

When I think about the rightful status of women, there appears in my mind the image of a long veiled and shy bride. I almost peep through her veil to see her innocent face. I see fear and curiosity in her bright eyes. She almost looks like a female deer to me - alert and scared. Gradually I try to chat with her and ask her a few questions:

'Can you read?'

She nods her head to say 'No'.

'Would you like to read?'

'I don't know how to read'.

"Suppose somebody teaches you, would you like to?"

"Yes, I would love to read. But who will teach me?"

She asks me. I look at her husband to answer her question.

He says, "Didi, why do you bother yourself with this? If she learns to read, she will start reading the film magazines and story books. She will neglect whatever little work she does at home. At present she somehow manages to cook two meals a day. If she learns reading, who will attend to the kitchen? In any case, it is not my job to teach her. I work in the office. I don't have time!"

It simply shows how erroneous are the views of men about the education of women.

The following dialogue between a wife and husband further reveals man's dominance over women:

Husband: Have you received your salary cheque?

Wife: Oh yes, I brought cash.

Husband: Why is it short by one hundred rupees?

Wife: Yes dear, I deposited this sum in my fund to save income tax.

Husband: There should be a limit to everything. Who asked you to do so?

Wife: It is not a big amount. You shouldn't bother

about it. We can manage with your salary this time.

Husband: You shouldn't think about my salary. 'I' have to decide how 'I' spend it. You cannot dictate me ! It is my privilege.

Wife: Then its my salary and I shall decide how to spend it.

Thus it is always the will of the husband that must prevail. He wants to have complete control over his wife's income too. But why? Is it proper? Can there be no equitable sharing of responsibilities and duties? This problem needs serious consideration. Unless there is a change in the outlook of men towards women, their self-reliance and freedom will remain an illusion; their individuality can never develop and it would be extremely difficult for her to regain her rightful status in the society.

One of my friends once asked me if I did my shopping alone. I replied:

"Of course! But does it matter?"

"Does you husband not object to it?"

"Why should he? We take decisions after mutual consultation and discussions. We respect each other's wishes. Neither of us tries to dominate."

"Is that so?" she looked surprised and then said, "I hand over my salary to my husband. So long as my mother-in-law was alive, she used to take it".

One wonders when will women become self-reliant and have the decision making abilities to use their earnings the way they like, or to live their lives as they wish to live.

Here is another example of how women are sometimes exploited and humiliated.

"The same rotten tea again? There is neither enough milk nor sugar. God only knows what it is that you try to make". He, the head of the family remarked. The housewife was silent.

"I don't understand what you really do the whole day except preparing two meals? And then you claim that you have to do too much work and it is telling upon your nerves! Stupid Woman! I am fed up with you".

She feels hurt. Tears well in to her eyes - she quietly withdraws herself.

Does house keeping mean preparing just the two meals? Did her husband ever make an effort to understand how she runs the household for the entire month? What are her problems? What are her dreams?

Society does not seem to bother about these questions and women continue to suffer.

It is well-known that whenever the question of education, self-reliance, economic independence or development of personality of a women is raised, people frown and look unconcerned. At times, women find it difficult to assert themselves.

Now-a-days women are passing through a period of transition. At times they become aware of their ability to act positively but at other times they fail to recognise their importance and feel helpless and compelled to live a miserable life.

The status and image of women have changed considerably from time to time. In the vedic era a women enjoyed respect and prestige. She could participate in discourses. She was free to teach, to run ashrams and to choose her life partner. Gargi, Maitreye, Apala, etc, distinguished themselves as learned women. Young children were taught to be faithful and show equal respect to both their mother and father.

Later on women gradually lost their position. Manu described that a women should be dependent on her father in childhood, on her husband in young age and on her son in the old age. Society has followed this prescription for its convenience. But this is an age of science. We are talking tall about the 21st century and one wonders if this man-dominated image of woman is still to be accepted? Centinly not. Values have changed now and gradually the woman is discovering herself. She is getting conscious of her capabilities. She knows her duties. She is becoming aware of her legal rights as well. Soon she will be able to preserve her pride

Writers and poets have written a great deal about the image of women. For instance, the National Poet, Maithili Shran Gupta laments one her stereotype image in his famous lines

“अबला जीवन, हाय, तुम्हारी यही कहानी ...”

The eminent poet Sumitra Nandan Pant discovered in her a goddess, mother and a life partner. His description is not imaginary. It is a reality. Simply talking about the equality of women from a pulpit will carry no meaning unless the society accepts and establishes it. Education and language are the most powerful means for recognising the rights of women and portraying their image in a light, different from the one existing in society.

Lectures, books and academic discussions on the status of women will have little impact unless the society changes its outlook and its mode of thinking undergoes a transformation. We have to accept woman in her role as mother, wife and a life force in the true sense. For this an effort will have to be made to build up a new society and in this reconstruction the role of the teacher shall be vital. The medium of this reconstruction will be our students—both boys and girls. It will be possible to build up a new society and establish the prestige of women once again through them. Today it has become imperative to make efforts to do away with the inequality between men and women. In order to appreciate afresh the position of women in the house, family, society country and the world, the new generation has to be made aware of the new values and this heavy responsibility falls on the shoulders of teachers.

Although we are convinced of the important role of women in family and society, we do not do much to improve their lot. How many of us have tried to teach the letters or the alphabets to an illiterate woman in the family? Whenever there is a move to emulate the status of women, society becomes suspicious. No change in the status of women is acceptable to it. Family and society become suspicious because they fear that any change in the status of women will spoil the system that provides them comfort. The

women have continuously suffered, but they have always provided the desired comfort to men. The Indian woman has been satisfying her husband irrespective of the fact that she might be feeling suffocated and living a hard life while working just as a housewife. These facts show that inspite of her subordination and secondary status, woman is very important. She is the pivot around which everything moves — house, family and the society. It is gratifying to note that a process of change has begun. Women are becoming aware of their importance and the process of change cannot be stopped. However, women have to come forward to build up their own image. But for this also it is essential that they get equal opportunities for education.

Women teachers have an important place in education system and their role is significant. They should have open minds. These teachers can help in eliminating biases from the minds of children and change their outlook towards any taboos against working women. They can provide women with a new image and impress it upon the minds of children.

The teacher can tell the students that there should, first of all, be equality in the family. It is unfortunate that the woman in the family bears the brunt of the household work. It is not realised that running the household is a joint responsibility and all the family members have to share it. This idea has been enumerated in the identified values (See Chapter I) on Status of Women. The teachers can draw the students' attention to the prevailing inequality and injustice. If the sister can prepare tea, why can't the brother cook meals? Anita, a university student complains that when her brother returns home, it is she who is asked to prepare tea for him. It is never the other way round, even though Anita may be very tired. If the teachers use such examples, it will have the desired effect on the students and their attitudes will gradually change. In this way, disparity between men and women can be eliminated in the long run.

Teachers have to convince their students that no work is below one's dignity. Every work has its own importance. If women can step out of their homes and work in every walk of life, why can't

men do so at home? It is true that women have been doing household jobs for ages, but for this no women should be looked down upon. That men should continue to avoid this work, is an unhealthy practice. We now find that women are playing significant roles outside the home as well. It would be worthwhile if all the members of the family try to share the responsibilities. Teachers should also inculcate among their students the value of hard work and self reliance.

In some foreign countries, boys and girls don't hesitate in doing such jobs as washing up in hotels and selling newspapers on the roads. Along with their studies, they work and earn to meet their expenses. They earn while they learn. Teachers should explain to their students that any honest and hard work is neither bad nor humiliating.

Lack of education and the purda system for women are the results of inequality between the two sexes. Many social rigidities and customs such as dowry, bride price etc. continue tarnishing the image of women. Evil customs and lack of education have created numerous obstacles in awakening women. So long as teachers do not strive to remove these obstacles and develop a new outlook through education, such traditions will not come to an end.

The Government has taken positive steps in this direction through adult education. Men and women can take advantage of this programme. But this programme can become meaningful only when teachers are alert and feel personally involved in it.

Women are used as symbols of opulence and sex. They adorn themselves with beautiful clothes and ornaments to demonstrate their husband's wealth and prosperity. They are expected to remain as decorative dolls. At times, the helpless but sensitive women have opposed this attitude. In the novel 'Saheb Bibi Aur Gulam' Vimal Mitra depicts that a beautiful, good, polite, loving and devoted wife has no importance for her husband. Whenever she protests and gets agitated in excitement, she is advised by her husband to remain content with her clothes and jewellery. It should make no difference to her if her husband spends his nights with dancing girls.

Woman is not a thing or property. She is a human being. She has her own will. The teacher has to get this fact accepted that the roles of both the husband and wife in a family, are complementary to each other and equally important.

Families often discriminate between boys and girls. Hence, when we talk of equality, we have also to think of equal rights. Very often our outlook is narrow in this regard. The general attitude is that girls, at the most, need to be literate enough, with an ability to read and write. Here the responsibility of teachers becomes important. They have to explain the importance of education to their students, especially the girls, and inspire them to pursue higher studies.

In most families the woman is left behind in matters of decision making. Important decisions are taken by the man and the woman is only informed about it. This is true of all issues from marriage to the selection of a career. Teachers can instil self-confidence and awareness in girls to help them develop the ability to take decision. The curriculum should be prepared in such a way that women are presented as emerging out of tradition-bound values. Carefully designed textbooks can help in preparing the students for new roles in society.

The discussion in this section has referred to certain well known negative attitudes to women and their role in the family and society. The positive contribution that the teachers of mother tongue can make in countering such attitudes with a view to fostering new and healthy values among the students has been stressed. It is heartening to note that the present day situation is not all that bad. Change for the better is taking place. It only needs to be accelerated.

Chapter - IV

**Empowerment of Women through
the Teaching of Mother-Tongue**

(A) Selection of Themes

Shashi Sharma



Shashi Sharma

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(A) Selection of themes

Down the ages many intellectuals, philosophers and social reformers have agitated and launched protest-movements against injustices done to women. But unfortunately these movements did not gain momentum. However, in the more recent times with the emergence of the National policy on Education 1986, the movement against injustice to women has acquired now dimensions. In order to make this movement more meaningful and effective it is essential that the teachers become aware of the equality between the two sexes, and the curriculum planners try to prepare children to face life without any inhibitions. It would be appropriate to say that education, especially when it is supported by public funds, cannot exist in isolation-dissociated from school concerns. In a welfare society education has to become a vehicle of social change. If this view point is accepted, then it would be agreed that the language teachers, who have a wide choice of themes and a wide range of students within their reach should besides developing the linguistic ability of their pupils, inculcate in them positive values by selecting and highlighting such content as contributes to removing sex-bias.

The role of teachers of the mother tongue is not only limited to teaching the lessons, explaining difficult words, doing the exercises, the questions and the answers. They have to use all these to create a better image of women and help their students become familiar with it.

Some teachers might argue that their role is limited to teaching whatever the textual material contain. This only leads to the need for the writer to incorporate the right kind of content in the textual material. If it has not been incorporated or is not present in adequate measure, then the teacher of the mother tongue has to use his own resources to supplement and correct the inadequacies of the textual material. He can do so by means of exercises, discussions and by giving new exercises in the form of writing essays, descriptions or co-curricular activities.

Alertness against Prejudices

It is not necessary that all the lessons in the book should have female characters. or should necessarily praise them. A lesson should have a balanced portrayal of men and women depicting respect for each other's work. Here is a story to depict this situation:-

As soon as he served the food, Vivek called out,
"Didi, come! I have prepared your favourite dish.

I am sure you would like it."

Rachna, who was folding clothes in the room, called back
"I know, my brother is as fond of cooking as he is of eating
good food. I am just coming."

"Where is Papa ? Call him also."

After some time all the three members of the family were
enjoying the meals. As soon as papa looked at the well-cooked
and well-served food, he once again thought of his wife. He
helped himself and said "Vivek, the taste of the food you have
cooked has once again reminded me of your mother. In spite
of my repeated efforts I have never succeeded in cooking such
tasty food. It seems Rachna too is as bad at cooking as I am."

Here, the teacher has the opportunity to introduce to the students
the value of equality which permeates this excerpt. The teacher
can point out that in this passage the ability and capability for doing
different jobs are equal in both the sexes. Here Rachna is a girl,
yet she is not interested in cooking. Vivek is a boy but he likes
and enjoys cooking. It is, therefore, implied that cooking is not
exclusively a woman's job. It is a healthy division of work, when
a man is employed outside and the woman does the household work.
But as and when needed, both can do any job, inside the home
or outside.

Examples of this type can correct the prejudices of students to
a certain extent. As soon as the children enter the school, the teacher
becomes their ideal. The child is like a lump of clay in the hands
of teachers to be suitably moulded by them into a beautiful piece
of art. Thus, the process of inculcating the right values in a soci-
ety ridden with prejudices starts with the teacher.

The image of women has been soiled in various ways. The case
of childless couples may be taken for example. It is always the
wife, who is to blame for not conceiving although she may have
fertility, and the defect might be in the husband. Not only is she
stigmatised with barrenness, but even her presence is not toler-
ated at auspicious occasions as the attributed infertility is not con-
sidered to augur well.

The teacher can expose his students to a rational viewpoint which
will help them get rid of superstitions—for example, they can
explain that a childless woman can adopt an orphan - it may be
a boy or a girl. It may also be possible for her to have corrective
treatment and surgery, after which she may be able to bear a child.
By putting the issues in a correct perspective, the teachers can
present an unbiased picture to their students. Here is another exam-
ple:

Ten year old Rani asked her mother,

"Ma, why are you fasting today ?"

The mother replied, "I am fasting for your Papa's well
being."

Rani's curiosity was aroused and she said,

"Ma, when does Papa fast for your well being ?"

The question left her mother speechless. Just then Papa
appeared with the answer, "Men do not observe fasts. Fast-
ing is women's job."

Rani was not satisfied so easily. She said, "Why ?
Why shouldn't you observe fast for Ma ?"

Her grandmother, who was listening to this dialogue
patiently, decided that it was pointless to waste time in arguing
with the girl. She was angry. She said,

"The children these days have become so impertinent. They

always ask questions as if they cannot believe their elders. In our time we never asked so many questions. We just did what our elders asked us to do. We had complete faith in them"

Papa went into the other room and Rani's mother again got busy with her work. Rani, however, was not satisfied. She was thinking about her mother who would do all her daily routines without eating anything. She would eat only when the moon appeared in the sky. Her childish intellect was grappling with the dilemma of the relationship between man's landing on the moon on one hand, and worshipping of the same on the other. Her teacher had explained that the moon is also a planet like the earth. Rani again went to see her mother, who could see the question writ large on her face. She explained :

"Rani, it is customary in our society to observe fasts for the welfare of husband and children, especially the boys. It is a part of our tradition. When you grow up, you will understand it."

It is suggested that in such case the teacher should inform the children that these days, when both husband and wife work outside the home, both of them should participate in all religious functions and ceremonies. However, it should be kept in mind that the complete rejection of any traditional festival or embellishment depends upon the understanding of the teachers themselves. Hence the teachers should be extremely careful in their efforts to lift the students above superstitions.

Creating Awareness Regarding the Negative and the Positive Values

The teachers should also make the students aware of the stereotyped image of women if one exists in the lesson. In addition, they should also tell them about the positive qualities of women. The point can be illustrated through the following story:-

Dinesh had been lying sick in bed for the last three days. He was anxiously waiting for his wife. She had gone to her office. The children had gone to their aunt's place. Dinesh had asked his wife to take a few days off. She, however, was more worried about her office than anything else. He was pitying himself.

"Here I am, all alone, with none to give me even a glass of water. It was much better in the good old days when women stayed at home and looked after their families." He moaned and turned his side. Just then another thought flashed into his mind. Just a week back when Asha had fever, he himself never took leave to look after her. "After all," he thought, "I have only a slight temperature. I can look after myself." With these thoughts, Dinesh drifted off to sleep.

In the above extract both positive and negative values are clearly stated. The teachers must familiarise the students with these values. It must be explained to them that change is the basic law of nature. Values also change with time.

Interpretation of Negative and Positive Values

The times are changing fast. Women are becoming self-reliant. Aware of their entity, they want to be independent. However, it is very important to keep in view the limits of this freedom. The independent woman of our dreams does not mean an undignified woman, or some one out of the world. Today when boys and girls study together in co-educational institutions, the teachers' responsibility increases. They must develop in the students a sense of balance and mutual understanding, for example:-

An irritated Natasha said, "Mummy, you never allow me to go out with my friends. You have no control over Pinto. He always comes late at night. I am no longer a child. I am fifteen now."

"Natasha, we do not want to tie you down in any way. You have a lot of freedom but you must not misunderstand the

word freedom. Grow a little older, become a little more mature, then no one will stop you in any way. Pinto is after all four years older than you. Four years back I never allowed him to stay out so late. Even now, doesn't he get a scolding when he is late?"

But Natasha was not convinced. Her temper did not cool down and she angrily went to her bed.

In this extract we find that since Natasha is a girl, she is not permitted to leave the house late in the evening. This event illustrates the negative side of the value, but at the same time we find that the more experienced mother makes an effort to curb the behaviour of her self-willed daughter. The irony is that sometimes men who want to keep women under their protection by right, are the cause of fear due to which a woman cannot easily step out of her house. Men profess to be the protectors of women. But it is men themselves and not women from whom protection is needed because they can molest and take undue advantage of women. The teachers have to present the situations very tactfully and carefully before their students.

How clearly the exposition of the relevant theme is carried out depends on the skill of the teachers. In this context another sample is cited below:

"Bhakolia, Mangar's wife was his ideal mate. They had two children and Bhakolia still looked young and healthy. As such, when her husband fell ill and became weak, she could look after him and the children. She was able to support him financially. (Mangar - Ek Halwaha, a short story written by Ram Vriksha Benipuri)

The above extract throws some light on the two qualities of women which reveal positive values. First is her image of motherhood that gives life, and second, her support to her husband when the need arises.

Here, while talking of the life giving ability of women, the teach-

ers must also introduce the students to the harsh truth of life. While giving birth to children a woman attains motherhood, but it makes her physically very weak. Sometimes her husband does not even bother about her poor health. The teachers must tell the senior students that eulogising 'motherhood' and considering a woman's body as a mere child-bearing machine is a disgrace to humanity.

A woman can adjust herself to circumstances better than man. An example of this is Bhakolia. Mangar is still the same Mangar - call him rigid in his attitude or call him stupid, but Bhakolia is no longer the same. She does whatever work is available - looks after one child and fetches water for another. And from whatever she earns in this way, she first feeds Mangar and then eats only what remains. Even after all this, Mangar is always finding fault with her.

That they adjust to circumstances, is an attribute of women which has always been exploited. Bhakolia has learnt to adjust herself to the circumstances but her husband Mangar scorns the change. Even in the old age, when his own limbs are useless and his hard-working wife struggles hard to feed him, his attitude towards his wife does not change. Instead of acknowledging her devotion, he continues finding fault with all she does.

The teachers should make it clear to the students that though a woman is patient by nature, her patience should not be tested frequently. Women should be viewed not merely as the means of service and devotion but also as active workers. If a man's work is respected, the work of woman should also be respected. Both these facts should always be borne in mind, then only these two wheels of the chariot will be able to pull together.

In the above extracts certain points have been highlighted. It is the teacher's responsibility to present, in the right perspective, the male-female equation present in the lesson. This idea of equality or inequality may be clearly stated. In any case, the teachers should be capable of recognising, evaluating, and measuring the values imbibed in the subject to be able to fulfil this function.

Suggestions for Extra Reading Material

In order to convey, highlight and...

earlier, it is imperative that the teachers suggest some extra reading material to the students. This can be done by asking them to choose a play they wish to enact, or learn some poems they would like to recite, or even select some good short story they would like to convert into a play. Further, a class room discussion can be initiated to bring out both the negative and positive values.

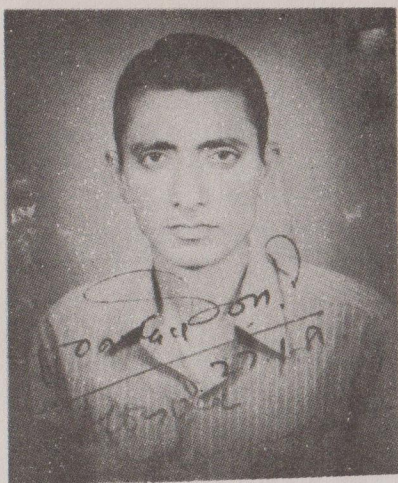
Reading Material

From time to time a short life history and the works and the pictures of famous women can be displayed on the walls of the classroom, or on the 'display boards' in the corridors of the school or in the library. Here the teachers can choose a historical or literary figure and prepare a short play or a drama on her life, for instance Rani Lakshmi Bai, Rani Durgawati, Dhruvaswamini, Kamayani etc. are such figures which can be selected for the purpose. They can also arrange poetry competitions, or Kavi-Darbars. The teachers should search out and present before the students the lives of female characters who illustrate and present the desired attitudes.

All said and done, teachers are the torch-bearers for the students and they should be able to justify this by being their guides in building up healthy and humanitarian attitudes.

(b) Bringing attitudinal change through Language teaching

Jagmohan Singh



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Bringing attitudinal change through Language teaching

All teaching involves inculcation of values, at least in some measure, but language teachers have greater opportunities to do so more effectively and on a larger scale. Language teachers can play a key-role in bringing about attitudinal change in the students. They have to shoulder greater responsibility of promoting positive values and desirable attitude in children. In this context the importance of the role of a teacher of mother-tongue in removing sex-bias from the minds of the students cannot be minimised.

Language teachers will have to pay due attention to the basic need of correct pronunciation to ensure effective communication. It should be borne in mind that it is they, who are models for their students to imitate. The thematic content selected by the teacher for organising activities of language-learning should conform to the age, interests, mental maturity and linguistic ability of the pupils. Simultaneously, due care must also be taken to avoid such themes as might degrade the position of women or tarnish their image. The teachers will have to make continuous efforts to highlight the positive aspects of the theme while presenting the material in the class.

Structures

Students should be encouraged to participate actively in discussions and conversation without any fear of making mistakes in the construction of their sentences. During discussions if remarks or comments of students depict ideas derogatory to women, it could be a reflection of their family background or dogmatic thinking prevailing in the local environment. Hence, the teacher should employ the question-answer technique to motivate the students to think in a more logical and critical way so that they may develop the right values and attitude by considering all the related issues.

The skills of listening and speaking develop side by side when students participate in discussions or deliberations. From the very beginning the teachers should make planned efforts to maximise

the student's participation in discussions. What is most desirable, is the effort of the teacher directed towards analysing the answers and reactions of the students so as to bring about desirable change in their attitude. For example, conversation may include such questions as:

- What is your name?
- How many brothers and sisters do you have ?
- Do you help your parents in the domestic work ?
- How many of your brothers and sisters go to school ?

The teachers may get different answers to these questions. The questions regarding helping in domestic work may receive a variety of answers. Some responses may refer to the stereotyped situations of only the girls doing the household and manual work at home. Some other responses may project positive values of sharing and cooperation in all jobs in the house.

One of the students may tell that all his brothers and sisters go to school, while the other may say that only he and his brother go to school but not the sisters. Some student might say that both he and his brother still go to school, while their sister has discontinued. He may further say that his father believes that since the girls have to get married and be sent off to their in-law's house, there is no point in educating them. The language teachers should not let such opportunities go unexploited. They should try to project positive values such as equality of opportunities through questions and discussions. They will have to work very efficiently and logically in such conversations or discussions. The answers to various types of questions received from the students will have to be analysed properly and suitable guidance will be needed to motivate them to think in proper direction, so that development of right type of values and attitudes may be promoted. For example, the teacher may again make queries such as :

- Which of the families of Deepak, Rama, Dinesh, Sudha and Kamal do you regard as the best one ?
- Why do you regard the family of this child as the best one ?
- What type of parental attitude is best for their children

according to you ? and so on and so forth.

Thus the inferences drawn from such discussions may be written on the black-board and the students may be asked to read them and copy them in their exercise books.

Thus practice in framing and using sentences can be related to the values and ideas commensurate with status of women.

Sentence Patterns

The textual material to be presented to the students in the printed form should be developed in a well planned manner. Keeping in view the principles of teaching 'from simple to difficult', lessons should be presented in textbook in a graded manner. After the introduction of the letters of alphabet and word reading, sentences, groups of sentences, paragraphs, stories, narrations should be presented in a proper sequence.

A scrutiny of the textual material presented in the current textbooks reveals that there are a number of lessons which lack in suitable representation and reference to the ability of women. Though there is ample scope in the lessons where the status and ability of women could be highlighted directly or indirectly, it has not been done. For example, the English version of a few sentences from a Hindi textbook is given below :

"Rakesh, you may go to see the exhibition today. Take these sweets and share these with Raju. You may go there by train. Do not quarrel with your friends in the train."

In the above passage we do not find a single sentence about the girl, who appears in the illustration which is supposed to support the text. This is, undoubtedly objectionable, particularly from the viewpoint of giving the representation to female characters. In order to make up for this deficiency, the teachers may frame some sentences and write them on the black-board. If the teachers do not do so, the girls in the class may unconsciously form the impression that opportunities for going to school, visiting the exhibition and eating sweets are meant only for the boys.

Idioms and Proverbs

Idioms: Knowledge and competence of using idioms and proverbs is essential for the extension and the strengthening of language behaviour as well as ensuring effectiveness in communication. Much can be expressed by using a minimum number of words through idioms and proverbs. Care should however, be taken that idiomatic expressions may not make, even remotely, derogatory references to the honour, prestige, status and ability of women. A few instances of using certain idioms in this discriminatory way are given below:

1. 'Aansoo bahana' : Well, I am here. Why are you shedding tears ?" He said.
आँसू बहाना
2. 'Haath Barhana" : There was nobody to render a helping hand after the death of her husband.
हाथ बढाना

The above examples give the impression that women lack in courage to face the odd circumstances. A woman usually starts weeping over a ticklish matter, as if shedding tears is the exclusive characteristic of women alone. Men are iron-willed for all time and can face any type of eventuality without being disturbed. This very idiom could be taught in another way without changing its meaning. One could say:

"It is futile to shed tears if there had been a loss in business. You Should start afresh with zeal and perseverance and your efforts will be rewarded."

The use of the other idiom above, conveys the idea that women are wholly dependent on others and cannot lead their lives by being self-reliant. The conclusion is clear. While exemplifying the idioms, care should be taken not to use such examples of sentences which may present women in an unfavourable manner. Students should also learn not to use such sentences. Instead, sentences presenting a favourable picture of women should be framed, such as :

1. 'Char chand lagna' : The conquest of the Everest by Ten Singh brought fame for India, but similar achievement by Bachhendri Pal has enhanced her prestige.
चार चांद लगना
2. Writing in golden letters : Rani Lakshmi Bai fought bravely against the British rule. Her courage and valour is written in golden letters in the history of India.
स्वर्णक्षरों में लिखना

Many such examples can be quoted. The language teachers can take the hint from the above examples.

Proverbs:

The word 'Proverb' is used for some popular and wise saying. Proverbs are framed on the basis of experience of social life and are used according to their context to add effect or emphasis to a statement. One basic difference between an idiom and a proverb is that an idiom is a phrase or part of a sentence and it is used in a sentence to elucidate the meaning while the proverb is self sufficient and independent in itself and retains its independent identity even when used in a sentence. One example of each is given below:

Idiom	Proverb
मोम हो जाना	नाच न जाने, आँगन टेढ़ा
Use: My uncle is very kind-hearted and emotional in temperament. He is generally moved deeply at a person's miserable condition.	Use: The brush is not defective. You are not good at painting. (A bad workman always quarrels with his tools.)

As in the case of idioms, it is essential to take precaution in the use of proverbs also. Their usage should do no harm to the prestige of women. In order to elaborate this point, a few examples of some of the proverbs given in a book of grammar are quoted below:

(1) चोर की दाढ़ी में तिनका

Usage: Why is she getting afraid of reality? *The sin speaks for itself.*

(2) थोथा चना, बाजे घना

Usage: She never works seriously but she is expert in *making lame excuses.*

Gender specifications of the persons in illustrative sentences as well as of the interlocutors should be done carefully. Effective and meaningful use of language requires an appropriate choice of words. At the same time it is necessary that they do not carry over expressions of sex-bias.

From the very beginning the teachers will have to make well-planned efforts for developing in students the competence of using appropriate language so that in their oral or written communication they may not use such terms, phrases or language that may be derogatory to the honour of women. Desirable attitudes and values may be developed in them by ensuring the development of the ability of using appropriate language.

Literary References

One of the major objectives of teaching language and literature is to communicate the legacy of cultural heritage of the country to the new generation. From this point of view, the role of language teaching is most crucial. Hindi which is one of the mother tongues has passed through a long period of evaluation. The change in social life and the cultural aspects have affected the pattern of language behaviour and its usage in various contexts from time to time. The long process of development of Hindi language and literature includes the literary works and references in which female characters also figure. A number of references of literary works of Hindi, which if quoted in isolation and out of context, appear to be objectionable. To avoid the possibility of misinterpretation of such references, the teachers should explain them with reference to the social and temporal context.

For example the following lines from the *Ram Charit Manas* of Tulsidas are often quoted:

“ढोल गँवार शूद्र पशुनारी
सकल ताड़ना के अधिकारी”

“नारि स्वभाव सत्य कवि कहहीं
अवगुण आठ सदा उर रहहीं”

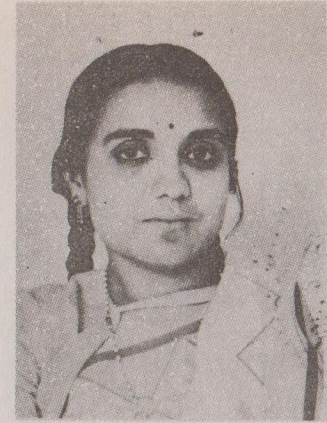
If the above lines are interpreted out of context the literal meaning would be highly insulting for women. It is not possible to change the context of the classics, but the teachers can certainly put such statements in balanced perspective. The first example in which a reference is made to the objects of thrashing is not the view point of either the poet or of Lord Ram.

Similarly, the second example represents the viewpoint of the wicked character of Ravana. Besides, there are many instances where Tulsidas has said good things about women. In addition to Tulsidas, there are many poets in Hindi literature like Kabirdas, Raskhan, Maithili Sharan Gupta etc. whose literary works also have several such references. If these references are not interpreted in their proper context, they may be taken as remarks against women. It is expected of language teachers to use forms of expressions in such a way that students may develop a desirable attitude towards women.

Letter Writing and Composition

The teaching of these items usually follows stereotypes. It is either the father writing to his son, or the obedient son writing to his father. There are only a few letters written by mothers to their sons. There are even fewer letters being exchanged between brothers and sisters. Similar bias is also found in the choice of themes for paragraphs and essay writing. Topics dealing with women and their achievements are hardly ever introduced. The result is that in writing on topics like "Indian Culture" students almost exclusively adopt a male view point and write about men. One's favourite author is always supposed to be a male writer and no topic like 'Your Favourite Heroine' is set for composition writing.

When one begins noticing biases of this kind one finds that even language teaching can be distorted in its choice of sentences, exercises, examples, characters, themes and topics. All this needs to be rectified and balanced. And the teacher of the mother-tongue has an important role to play in this venture.



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Chapter - V

Reinforcement for Assimilation

(A) Use of Teaching Aids

Mira Dave

(A) Use of Teaching Aids

The history of human civilization is very old. From the primitive age to the modern times, human beings have been wanting to exchange thoughts, ideas and opinions. They have always been eager to communicate with each other. Communication refers to the exchange of ideas, attitudes, knowledge, skills and thoughts. Language is considered to be an important medium of communication, though people communicate not only through language but also through gestures, glances, demonstrations, signals and pictures etc. Human beings have constantly tried to improve the methods and materials of communication. As long as there is need for communication people will constantly endeavour to improve the effectiveness of their communication. As we all know, teachers use audio-visual material to make their teaching effective. Modern technology has provided films, film strips, radio, television, photographic slides, tapes, tape-recorders, discs and records etc. In addition to these teachers use flash-cards, pictures, actual objects and the black-board for drawings. They can bring in the whole world into their classroom and motivate the learners. The use of such material provides experience to learners and makes them feel involved.

In fostering positive values about women and countering the negative ones, the teaching of mother tongue can be of great help. We know that to bring in attitudinal change is very difficult. But children are very receptive. If a particular type of attitude is developed in them from childhood, social change becomes easier and smoother as the children grow. But for doing that, only occasional indication or reference does not help. Constant hammering is needed. On the other hand, while dealing with children we have to be very careful. Children are interested in newness and variety. They get bored and lose interest if they are told the same thing many a time in the same way. So we have to find out different devices to convey the message regarding equality of sexes to them.

As discussed earlier, conveying new ideas through the mother-tongue involves both literature and language. In the earlier chapt-

ers we have seen how the awareness of equality of sexes could be created through proper use selection, and treatment of thematic content and the proper use of words, phrases, idioms etc. Now, when the teachers deal with the thematic content in the classes, they use the audio-visual material, to make things more clear to the learners. But these devices should be selected and used keeping in view the age and level of the learner. Now let us discuss some of the teaching aids, keeping in view the different school stages.

Primary Stage

a) *Flash Cards*: Flash cards are used primarily to teach words and language patterns. When language patterns are taught the sentences that are made, should refer to both the sexes for practice. Such sentences should be framed in a way which do not reflect any sex bias nor carry stereotyped image of women. Reinforcement of sentence patterns should be made with sentences of the following type in which women are shown doing work that is traditionally associated with men and vice-versa.

My father is making coffee.

Rohit has brought a bucket of water for mother.

Asha's mother always teaches her Mathematics.

Meena and Raju have recently joined NCC.

My aunt has gone to her office.

The teachers could also ask pupils to make more sentences of this type. It can be brought to the notice of the pupils that father can also make coffee or prepare dishes for dinner and mother can also help them in their homework.

The boys in a family should also help the mother in the household work. Such sentences and their thematic analysis would make an indirect impact on children. The teachers should tell the boys in the class not to feel shy in helping their mothers and sisters. Household work is also important and dignified. The teachers should also encourage the girls to be ready to do any work, take up any challenge, to be independent, self-reliant and have confidence in their own capacity.

(b) *Pictures and Illustrations*: Pictures provide motivation in learning. They help in developing language skills and artistic and creative expressions. The teachers can make use of pictures to explain different situations. Objective analysis of illustrations given in the textbook should also be made. For example, there should be female characters too in the illustrations of an office, a garden, or a hospital. If the book is already printed, pupils should be told that women also do similar work.

Picture reading exercises could be done by individual students. All students should be given a chance to do each exercise with many different pictures. That would also help in developing their ability to express themselves effectively.

c) *Match-stick Drawing*: This device helps to make classroom teaching effective and interesting. The teachers should learn match-stick drawing and make use of it while teaching language patterns in the class. While doing this, they should be careful to choose characters from both the sexes e.g. Rekha is running, or Raju is running.

Upper Primary and Secondary Stage

a) *Pictures and Illustrations*: Pictures and illustrations are not usually used at the secondary level for teaching but at the upper primary stage, pictures play an important role in language teaching. The teachers should use picture reading to elaborate the themes in the textbook; but in addition, pictures with the following subjects, for example, could be presented for composition:

- (i) *Celebration of Diwali festival in a family*: a boy and two girls are firing crackers whereas father and mother together are making rangoli in front of the house;
- (ii) *Annual sports in school*: the picture might be divided into three or four parts in which different activities like cricket, tennis, athletics etc. for boys as well as girls are shown. There could be a game like 'musical chair' in which the boys and girls are shown to be participating. Another picture could depict boys and girls working as sales-persons;

men and women, boys and girls of different age groups could be shown looking at and buying books;

- (iii) *Preparation and celebration of Independence Day*: boys and girls together clean and decorate the classroom and the school compound; they all take part in sports, entertainment programmes, etc.
- (iv) *Mountaineering by young persons*: in which girls also participate.

After the pupils have read the pictures and described them, the teacher could further interpret the pictures and bring it to their notice that those girls are not afraid of firing crackers. Girls could play cricket or tennis. They could also join mountaineering camps and also take interest in books.

b) *Dramatization / Role-Playing*: Dramatic expression has played an important part in the lives of people. It is a flexible medium because it can be used in the teaching of many subjects. It is of great use for classroom learning because it develops the feeling of confidence and co-operation in the pupils and helps them in understanding the subject-matter better. But here we do not include well rehearsed drama which needs large amount of time, money and energy. The classroom drama usually means roleplaying. Plays, drama or skits on themes of equality of sex can be taken up as classroom activity in the form of role playing. They could be from the textbook and also from the supplementary readers or from any current significant event. The teacher could also turn some of the stories into plays; highlighting female characters into dialogues, conversation or short plays and let the class enact them. The pupils should be encouraged to take up the roles of male and female characters by boys and girls respectively. This would increase their motivation to study and would create confidence and interest in pupils, especially girls who usually feel shy and lack self-confidence and do not come forward for such roles. The atmosphere in the class should be so open that boys and girls do not feel shy in playing their roles.

c) *Classroom Conversation*: Like dramatic expression, this device would also help in the cultivation of the ability of the pupils to think and express themselves and develop their confidence in speaking and arguing. This could be made possible through question-answer technique, picture reading, oral expression of their experience etc.

d) *Recitation*: Poetry recitation is also one of the important devices to develop self-confidence in pupils. Recitation should become a usual practice in the class. All the pupils, boys and girls, should be made to recite poems in the class. In addition to reciting poems from textbooks, the students should be asked to recite poems of some other poets also. The pupils could also be asked to make a collection of poems written by and/or on women. The pupils should be encouraged to use the school library and the teachers should help them, wherever necessary.

e) *Language Games*: Two groups should be formed in the class: Group 'A'-girls; and Group 'B'-boys and the games could be played. There could be vocabulary games. The groups may name things related to different subjects such as names of animals or birds, names of things in a house, school, garden etc. There could also be a game like अन्त्याक्षरी or charade. Both the groups should be encouraged to compete with each other.

f) *Debates*: The teachers can organize debates in the class. Debates could be organised at the school level also. The topics should be related to women, achievements of women in different walks of life, literature created by women writers, well-known female personalities who have excelled in various fields etc. There can be elocution contests for girls only on subjects like, 'My ambition in life', 'What I would like to be', 'How I propose to spend my life', etc. Here the organiser could sum up the programme by saying that women are capable of doing work that has been traditionally done by men. It is just a matter of determination and acquiring skills. If women decide, they could also work like men and prove their worth.

g) *Radio and Tape Recorders*: Radio today has become an effec-

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tive instrument of mass media. It can become an integral part of teaching and learning a language, especially, the mother tongue. All AIR stations broadcast children's programmes as well as school programmes. Certain lessons of different standards are taught through school programmes. Pupils of upper primary and secondary classes should be given opportunities to listen to those programmes. They should be encouraged to listen to children's programme which are usually broadcast on Sundays. The pupils of Senior Secondary classes should listen to the Women's programmes. They would be able to understand and analyse the problems of women and develop awareness of the progress made by modern women.

Listening to the radio helps pupils in developing their listening ability, knowledge of standard language and correct pronunciation of words, ability to analyse and appreciate and discriminate the thoughts presented. It also helps in acquiring information and knowledge of many new things. So, the teacher should encourage them to develop the habit of listening to the radio.

If children cannot listen to such programmes at the time of their broadcast, the programmes could be recorded on tape and played to the pupils at some other convenient time. Tape recorders could also be used to record useful lectures which may be played to the pupils afterwards.

These programmes are recommended because they are carefully devised and incorporate the values which we are trying to promote.

Senior Secondary Stage

Pupils at this level are mature enough to understand the inequality between sexes in society and also in the attitudes of both men and women. So here, the teachers should take the maximum advantage of their maturity. They could bring to their notice the sex bias through the following devices.

a) *Classroom Discussions*: The teachers can invite criticism and comments from the pupils—both boys and girls on the role of women in different walks of life and the image of women presented in

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different lessons. They should try to analyse the pictures or the image of women given in the lesson. They should be asked to suggest alternatives. Such discussions would develop their thinking capacity to choose between right and wrong attitudes and behaviour.

b) *Use of Radio and Tape Recorder*: The programmes on women or by women broadcast on the radio may be listened to collectively and thereafter discussions could be held on them. Students should be asked to comment on them one by one.

c) *Television Programmes*: There are many programmes on the TV which highlight the positive image of women, their capacities, their choices, their problems and their advancement too. Recorded programmes could be shown in schools. If there is no TV set in the school, the pupils could be asked to watch the programmes at home and discussions on them could be held the next day. This could easily be done in the language classes. Pupils could express their thoughts and reactions easily in their mother-tongue. At the end of the discussion, the teachers should give their opinion, and thus they should lead the pupils to think positively about women.

Bringing about attitudinal change is a long and arduous process and reinforcement in an interesting manner is one way of doing it. For this, we have to make profuse but judicious use of different kinds of teaching aids. Such aids like flash cards, pictures, illustrations, tape recorders, films, film-strips, slides etc. are to be made use of in projecting the right image of women in society. Their selection should be made keeping in view the interests, aptitudes and mental level of the learners so that the concepts that we want to develop, form a part of their personality and everyone is ready to have positive and healthy attitude towards the other sex.

Most textbooks being used today, do not have enough lessons on equality between the sexes. There is almost no representation of women authors either. This is the case with some of the publications that were analysed by the NCERT. In a new textbook for class XII the works of 9 poets were included but not a single woman poet finds place in this book. These collected poems do not touch the subject of women at all. Only in one poem 'Ghar

ki Yad' by Bhavani Prasad Misra, there is some reference to a woman. He also thinks of his mother in the process. When women have been kept out of the lessons, there is, of course, no place for them in the exercises. The only option left with the teacher is to point out this imbalance between boys and girls to his class. The teacher can explain that there is no shortage of women poets in Hindi literature. It is also a fact that many poems have been written by women. Mira Bai, Mahadevi Verma, Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, Kirti Chaudhari, Shakunt Mathur, Indira 'Noopur' are some of the names which come to our mind at once. Similarly, in another textbook for class XII (Hindi Prose) there are only nine chapters and not a single one written by a woman. Only two lessons mention women and these are (*Naye Mehman and Rashtrakavi Subramania Bharthi.*) Both these lessons have only one question in exercises relating to women. It is therefore quite imperative to conduct awareness programmes even for those who are involved in the production of textbooks.

(B) Co-Curricular Activities

Bhavana Bhargave



Ms. Bhavana Bhargave

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Co-Curricular Activities

Education is not confined to textbooks only. It is also imparted through other curricular activities. Both boys and girls should get equal opportunities and facilities for participation in co-curricular activities such as children's fairs, festivals and excursions, anniversaries, sports, dramatics, literary and cultural activities etc.

I. Excursions:

Organising excursions is one of the important ways of providing opportunities for students to develop their personality. It is an important aspect of co-curricular activities. Whenever such excursions are organised, an effort should be made to encourage boys and girls to participate in them jointly. They should travel together and share both work and experience whether it be cooking, eating, mountaineering study of vegetation or establishing contacts with local people etc. There should be no discrimination against girls simply because they are girls.

II. Social Services:

One of the very important methods of eliminating sex-bias can be the involvement of both boys and girls in social service activities outside the school. Both of them can be sent to hospitals, institutions for the handicapped where they can jointly render valuable service to the needy. Both can write letters on behalf of illiterate persons to their relatives in the villages or cities. They can present flowers to them on festive occasions.

One very important social service they can render is to visit the slum areas. There they can jointly contact the residents and talk to them, particularly women, about sanitation, self occupation, population control etc. They can also tell them the stories of great women who have struggled against the social taboos and cruel customs and established themselves as valuable members of society. These boys and girls should particularly be promoted to persuade illiterate women to learn the 3 R's.

III. Camp-Fires:

Schools can organise camp-fires from time to time especially when boys and girls are taken out for excursions. On such occasions the villagers can be invited to join the camp-fires. They should be persuaded to present songs, dances etc. which the other students can also join in. This interaction will add to the interest and value of the trip. This kind of joint participation is an important medium for enabling students to eliminate sex bias. An added advantage would be that they would acquire knowledge of the way our rural people entertain themselves.

On their return the students should be encouraged to write their experiences and observations for publication in their school magazine, or elsewhere. Later on during festivals like Holi and Diwali some gifts and greetings may be sent to these villagers. This will help develop fellow feelings between the students and rural people.

IV. Sports & Games:

Since time immemorial boys and girls have played different games but now we find that girls also play all the games like boys. Schools should provide facilities for girls to participate in different games and sports. They should also make the students familiar with the names of the sports women of national and international fame. P.T. Usha is an excellent example for it.

Schools should initiate and develop the practices of mixed games for both girls and boys. This can be a very vital aid in eliminating sex-bias.

Games develop the sporting spirit in the participants. Girls also need proper development of their mind and body. Hence, they should be given appropriate opportunity for participating in the games and sports of their choice. Now a days judo and karate have become very popular. Such skills can be helpful for self-defence. Every school should have judo and karate classes, especially for girls.

V. Anniversaries:

Normally it is observed that schools organise anniversaries of

eminent men like Tilak, Gokhale, Shivaji, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru etc. Celebration of the anniversaries of eminent women is very rare, though it is true that for some time now the anniversary of Mrs. Indira Gandhi is being celebrated. But the anniversaries of other women celebrities should also be observed.

VI. Dramatics

Dramatics are of paramount importance for developing students' speaking and reading abilities. It can improve their power of expression and help them in proper gradation and modulation of their voice. Care should be taken to give different roles to students without any discrimination against girls. Dramatics can be utilised for producing greater effect of the stories of courageous, creative and talented women. It is the teacher's responsibility to develop the latent talents of girls in these spheres. These skills also play a very important role in the development of personality.

VII. Literary and Cultural Activities

Literary and cultural programmes include things like recitation of poems, singing of songs, telling stories, lectures, 'Kavi-Goshthis' etc. Children should be encouraged to write stories, poems and essays for publication in the school/ college magazines. The students should be encouraged to produce a magazine in which their own stories, poems, essays and articles can be published. These will have the added value of creative writing. Boys and girls should be equally motivated to take part in all these activities and make their contribution.

Another part of literary activities is the establishment of literary clubs. Both girls and boys can be their members. Students can present synopsis and reviews of books. Poems can be recited and stories be read out. They can be chosen from classics or they may be the original work of the students themselves. Care should be taken to include themes relating to the life and achievements of women from various fields of life.

Suggestions for extra reading material

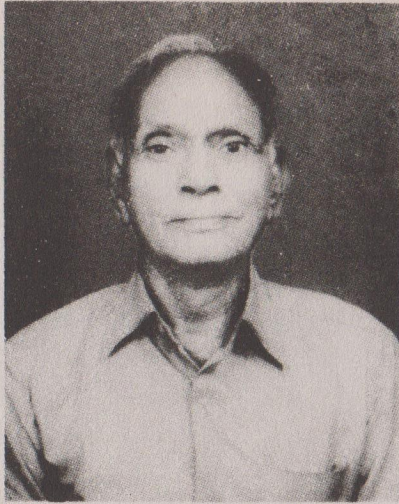
For inculcating desired values in the students, the teacher must

utilise extra-reading material as well. For instance from time to time a short life history, the works and the pictures of famous women can be displayed on the walls of the class or on the 'display board'. The teachers can choose a woman character from history or literature and prepare a short play or a drama on her life.

Many activities other than the usual class room teaching have been mentioned in this chapter. The teachers of the mother tongue can add some more activities on their own initiative, but the participation of both boys and girls must be ensured in all such activities.

Exercises

S.P. Upadhyaya



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(i) Exercises

Exercises are an integral part of the textual material for language teaching. We can bring out the values incorporated in the lessons through them. Even if a lesson contains a negative value, the exercises and questions can make students see the negativity and identify the positive counterpart. Many points which find passing reference in a lesson can be developed with the help of questions. The questions can be so devised that in answering them the students gain sensitivity to a problem or a value.

Questions can be asked verbally or in written form and the teacher can achieve the desired goal through them. The job of writing exercises require careful planning so that they may direct the students' attention to a stated or implied meaning, make them discover implications, draw inferences, identify injustice done to women and argue against it.

If the available textbooks or those in use do not have satisfactory exercises, the teachers may have to supplement them with their own. To illustrate how exercises can be used, an extract from a textbook in the mother-tongue (Hindi), is discussed below. In Uday Shankar Bhatt's one-act-play, 'Naye Mehman' the role of the housewife Revati, the heroine, is very significant. She is a devoted wife. Her husband Vishwanath is also equally sensitive and affectionate. Their conversation brings to light their mutual relationship.

- Revati : Why don't you take a few days leave? I am afraid that one of us will fall sick.
- Vishwanath : That is possible only if my leave is sanctioned. Even if I do get leave what about the expenditure? Any way, today you go and sleep on the terrace. Take the child with you. Poor thing is miserable due to heat. It is absolutely sickening here.
- Revati : That won't do. I will sleep downstairs. You go and sleep on the terrace, although, there is no breeze. The walls on all sides are

- burning with heat. However, you go up.
- Vishwanath : This is bad. You never listen to anyone else, but only do what you want. For fifteen days you have had a headache. Now if you sleep in the open air, you will feel better.
- Revati : You are being obstinate unnecessarily. You will not be able to sleep in the courtyard. There is not a whiff of air in this house. You will not be able to sleep at all. It does not matter for me. I can rest the whole day, but you have to go to the office.
- Vishwanath : No, this is not possible. You have to go upstairs to sleep today. In any case I have some work to do.
- Revati : What work can you do in this heat? God only knows where from you get such ideas. Go and sleep. The child and I will somehow pass the night on a cot in the courtyard.

The point to be made here is that this touching dialogue brings out an important aspect of Revati's character, yet the exercise did not contain any question on this to highlight the love and concern she had for her husband and the child. A simple question on this point could have been: "What do you learn about the mutual regard between Revati and Vishwanath from their dialogues?" Another question could be "Which part of the play do you find most touching and why?" or "Revati is totally devoted to her husband. Support this statement with examples." Or still another question "Revati and Vishwanath's marital life is based on complete equality and mutual understanding. Comment on this statement."

A few such questions would have shown Revati's character in its right perspective. They would have also strengthened male-female equality. The teacher can make up for this shortcoming by framing some more questions.

Now let us consider the simple question on Revati that occurs in the exercise: "In what way is Revati's treatment of the stranger

different from her treatment of the new guest, her brother?" Actually, the stranger is not a guest at all. He has landed at her house by mistake and somehow, Vishwanath wants to get rid of him. Till she learns all this, Revati treats him like a guest. Though the time is odd and she is suffering from headache, her first concern is to offer food to the guest.

After this the guest leaves and Revati's brother arrives. He arrives after spending a long time in locating the house and is apologetic about the oddness of the hour. Revati's natural joy in this case can only be understood by people sensitive to the love between siblings. Truly, Revati must have forgotten about her headache in the joy. Her brother repeatedly says that he does not want to eat. He wants to sleep after drinking some water. Revati, however, insists on his taking food and says that she would not let him sleep without eating.

The main objective of the playwright is to entertain. He shows how Vishwanath manages to get rid of his uninvited guests. Still, one must acknowledge that the question on Revati is not justified. It is also not clear as to what answer is expected. One straight answer to the question could be that Revati was thrilled to welcome her brother whereas she was rather unhappy when the strangers came to her house. This answer would present Revati's character unfavourably.

There could have been a separate question on Revati's character as a housewife. Such a question would have highlighted her love for her husband and the child as well as her sense of hospitality. The reason for the difference in Revati's behaviour towards the two is very clear. However, in order to bring out the good points of Revati's character, some other questions could be asked e.g.

Choose the right answer from the following.

Revati's reaction to her first guest and the second one differs because:

- (a) The first guest is an outsider while the second is her own brother ()
- (b) The first guest was worried only about himself while the latter did not want to give his sister and her husband any trouble at that late hour of the night()
- (c) Revati felt better as soon as she saw her brother. ()
- (d) There is, of course, difference between our relatives and outsiders, and we act in different manner towards the two.()

Put Tick Mark in the right answer.

Rashtra-kavi Subramania Bharathi is another lesson in the same book which deals with issues relating to women. The exercises contain only one question on Chellamma, Bharathi's wife and that too is indirect. After going against his wife's wishes, Subramania Bharathi advises her that "These literary works are our actual wealth. All other things are only monetary." The context is that Chellamma had asked him to get some good sarees for her from the award money he would be getting.

However, Bharathi bought only one saree and spent the rest of the money on two old Tamil literary works. He then consoles her with the above advice. The author of this lesson comments "somehow reconciling with disappointment Chellamma agreed with her husband, because his happiness was after all her happiness too."

The framer of the question is not touched by the pain and disappointment of Chellamma otherwise he could have at least asked one question.

"How do you react to Bharathi's behaviour towards his wife and how did she react to his not bringing sarees for her?"

There is another incident where Bharathi's treatment of his wife seems to be harsh. Bharathi used to trouble his wife in order to be hospitable to his friends. Money and provisions were always short. Once when his wife informed him that there has nothing in the house, he became very angry and shouted. "In future I will

not like to listen to your "no". He told her that she must not disgrace hm in the company of his friends by telling him that there were no provisions in the house.

It is, however, not clear whether Chellamma made this statement about having no provisions in the presence of outsiders. Then, if there were no provisions in the house then she had no option but to apprise her husband of the fact, otherwise she would have been charged of being inhospitable.

There seems to be no relevance in Bharathi's statement that, 'In future I will not listen to your 'no'. Why is this statement attributed to him?

We must say that the image of Subramania Bharathi which emerged from this lesson in the context of his interaction with his wife, does not match with his beliefs and vision of women. The examples of some of his poems are given below:

These poems clearly illustrate the respect and importance he attached to women.

1. We will destory this stupid tradition
which degrades women.
This arrangement of bondage and inferiority now ends.
Men and Women both will remain in this land as
equals.
Freedom; Freedom; Freedom.
2. The valour of the Rajputs
will remain so the world exists
Women's virtue is
Resplendent.
Herosim with justice
is honoured.
The flag revered by them
May its glory remain untarnished.

3. My virtuous wife
 who will sing in tune with me
 From our mutual joy
 The spring of poetry will burst forth.
 Mother, protect me in that lonely asylum.
 So that my poems can free the world.
4. Men and women
 Who are not even educated
 who cannot behave truthfully,
 who are corrupt and sinners.
 who have not undergone austerities.
 who do not attend to the counsel
 of the wise,
 They all sing his praises and
 They pray to him.
 He destroys their fear of death.
5. Listen I am proclaiming a new law—
 Woman is free.
 Listen carefully to what the law is:
 If all living being on earth are gods
 Then isn't wife a Goddess, speak of fool:
 You beast of flying and flights
 You become transported with joy
 Taking the name of freedom and compassion.
 But if your society cheats woman of her freedom
 What kind of life will there be on earth?
6. Those people are no more
 who considered it wrong for a woman to touch books.
 They deserved our shame, these strange men.
 They wanted women to remain closetted in their
 homes.
 Let us clap our hands.
 If they talk of the chastity of women
 It should be true of both husband and wife
 The tradition of not seeking
 The women's consent in marriage.

- We will crush it.
 Let us clap out hands
 Now women will make the laws and run the world.
 They see no less than men in intelligence.
 Let us clap our hands.
7. **New Woman**
 She is a new woman who walks confidently and
 looks through into your eyes
 Unafraid of anything on earth.
 She is illumined by the lamp of her knowledge.
 Such woman is strong of will.
 She does not lose her way.
 To get lost in the deep darkness of ignorance.
 Is not acceptable to her.
 Uncultured life
 And the accompanying anguish.
 She refuses with contempt.
 She will study numerous shastras.
 She will bring more joy and ease
 to life.
 The bonds of age-old traditions are broken.
 She will throw away superstitions.
 She will keep track of all events so that
 All can become like gods.
 She will win the praise of men.
8. **Dark**
 God has given women intelligence.
 But some feel on earth barred their way.
 what sense is there in closing one eye.
 And spoil all prospects?
 If the proximity of sight is encouraged.
 The darkness of ignorance will be closed.

There is another example. In another book for Class XI those were 7 stories. The 1st story entitled 'Namak' has been written by Razia Sajjad Zahir, who is mainly an Urdu writer. The story "Satya ke Moolya" by Yashpal and 'Dojya' by Shekhar Joshi have no female

characters., though there are some stories which have femal characters.

In the story 'Namak' by Razia Sajjad Zahir the heroine Sofia is the main character from the beginning to the end. She is the thread which emotioally binds together various people living in India and Pakistan even after partition. Her character is very effective and evocative. At the end there could be one question, such as "Delineate Sofia's character in your own works'.

Most of the questions and exercises of Premchand's story 'Thakur Ka Kuan' are related to the heroine Ganga. But all these questions are based on the sequence of events related to the main problem of untouchability dealt with in the story. Though Ganga is full of anger against the higher castes she does not have the guts to draw water openly from the well belonging to higher castes. The result is that Jekhu, her husband, is forced to drink dirty and foul smelling water.

The exercises on this story deal only with the problem of untouchables. However, there is a section of the society whose lot is equally bad. This is the female class. We get a glimpse of their plight in the story through those who have come to take water from the well on their husband's instance. Both are in a rebellious state of mind.

There is one more statement in this story which illustrates the mockery of our social set up. This story is directly related to women. Ganga satirically enumerates the number of ways in which the higher castes are supposed to be higher than her caste. She says "Yes, they are higher in their statements. We do not go round from street to street shouting that we are higher, we are the high castes, But If ever I come into the village the same men look at me treacherously."

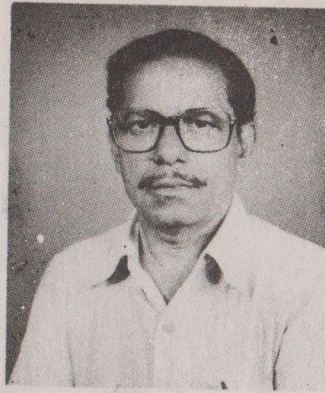
A question based on the last sentence should be asked. It could be like this: 'What satirical remark does Ganga make about the men of the higher castes?'

Some examples of questions in the textbooks are given above to point out how many of them are inadequate and how an imaginative approach to the framing of exercises can help the class teachers to make their students think for themselves and come to the right conclusion about the problems and the status of women. The exercises in textual material for teaching mother tongue can be an effective instrument of education about women. If used deftly, they will have the student correct their attitudes without getting the impression that ideas are being imposed on them. The editors of textual material and class-room teachers have to take the questions beyond the limited aim of language practice and make them instruments for original thinking, inference drawing and attitude changing.

Chapter - VI

**Role of Mother-Tongue Teacher in
Bringing about Attitudinal
Changes**

B. Sarojana and K. Kankiah



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Role of the Teacher in Bringing about Attitudinal Changes

The place of the mother tongue is at utmost importance in the curriculum. It is strongly felt that the language teacher, while developing the language skills can also bring about changes in the attitudes, interests and values of students.

Social reformers and national leaders started a number of movements, strove hard, and are still making ceaseless efforts to secure the due place for women in society. Attempts are being made to eliminate the social evils and ill-treatment meted out to them. The role of language teachers in moulding the attitudes of students is vital. While endeavouring to develop language skills they can treat the thematic content in such a way that young boys and girls acquire a healthy and desirable attitude towards each other.

Textbooks contain pieces of poetry, prose, drama, dialogue and conversation. The language teachers will no doubt, bring out the literary value of the text, and will impart their students linguistic proficiency. At the same time they should create through the thematic content awareness about the desired status of women. They should draw the attention of their students to the contemporary problems, their probable causes and discuss measures that could be taken for their solution. The students should be made to realize that now-a-days women are facing a large number of problems in and outside the home in their diverse roles as wives, mothers and employess. In order to make the students aware of the true place and power of women, the language teachers should, narrate the life story of great women and their achievements in various fields.

By narrating the true stories of great women like Durgabai Deshmukh, Florence Nightingale and Mother Teresa and their services to the society, the language teacher should impress upon the minds of students that both men and women have equally contributed to the progress of humanity, yet unfortunately women have been deprived of their due recognition and reward from the society.

When the issue like "Sri Sahagamomorn" come up for discussion, the language teachers should encourage students to examine the issues critically, probe this custom and understand as to why only the women are victimised.

Wherever necessary, the language teacher should refer to the names of social workers and reformers like Raghupathi Venkatachalam Naidu, Gurujada Appa Rao, Sri Kandu Kuri Veerasha Lingam Pantulugaru and Iswara Chandra Vidya Sagar who strove for the removal of social evils. They drew attention of the public towards making women aware of the need of taking due care of their health, acquiring general knowledge, taking up employment, participating in social programmes and developing their own personality. The language teachers have to make their students aware of these facts. It should also be emphasised that ours is a democratic country in which men and women are complementary to each other and both enjoy equal opportunities. Women should have some leisure time at their disposal so that they may participate in the social, economic, political and cultural programmes. Once the students become aware of the need of women and their role in society, a change in their attitudes towards women is bound to come.

A woman is capable of doing many such things which of till now have been considered as the works of man's domain. It has been proved by many women in different spheres e.g. Valentina Tereshkova travelled in space, the Japanese team of women on the peak of Mount Everest. Madame Curie's research in Physics, Chemistry and the discovery of radium followed by the award of the Nobel prize show that women can find 'a' place for themselves in the galaxy of great scientists. The teachers should let their students know that Lenin's socialist revolution gathered momentum under the leadership of Krupaskia. Alionar Roosevelt, Mother Teresa and Durgabai Deshmukh are only a few of the women personalities well-known to all of us. There are many more who are still invisible. It has however, been proved that if women get the necessary training and opportunity they will not lag behind men in any field.

The language teachers, should develop in their students the ability of critical thinking so that the students may draw right con-

clusions and correct inferences after reading the prescribed text. They should help the students in realising that it is unfair to have different codes of conduct for men and women in the society. Adultery on the part of men deserves as much condemnation as on the part of women. To expect woman to look upon her insincere and unfaithfully husband as a God is gross injustice. The students must understand that rules for men and women should be the same.

It is a known fact that the parents of a boy demand heavy dowry from the parents of the girl. They try to recover the entire amount of money spent on the upbringing and education of the boy, little realizing that the parents of the girl, too have to spent a huge amount of money on the upbringing and education of their daughter. The customs of bride-price and dowary are also the causes of untold misery. It is high time the boys realized that the girls are not mere 'things' to be auctioned to the highest bidder. The girls, too, will have to be bold enough to refuse to marry a docile boy whose parents demand dowry. They should be prepared to lead a spinster's dignified life rather than succumb to the sufferings and tortures induced by her husband and greedy in-laws for not bringing dowry. Often parents are not very enthusiastic about the education of their daughters. They think that for household work girls do not need much education. Moreover, if girls are busy at school who will do the work at home?

This, as we all know, is a wrong attitude. Girls are not only the citizens of tomorrow, they are also alongside men, builders of the nation in their role as mothers.

All these and other related issues need to be discussed and emphasised as part of class room education.

In every sphere like industry, administration and science the principle of equality of men and women has to be scrupulously adhered to. Any attempt to keep the women in a position inferior to the man gives rise to many problems. Social welfare is concerned with both men and women.

To sum up, the teachers of the mother-tongue have a great responsibility on their shoulders. They should expose the students

to such issues and themes which are relevant to women's status. The moulding of the student's views and beliefs does not stop here. New ideas, healthy values and due appreciation of the proper place of women in society should be brought home to students through the reading and writing work, practice and exercise material and cultural and co-curricular activities. In brief, the entire range of educational activities should be value-oriented.