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# UNIT 7 PARTICIPATORY CLASSROOM

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## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

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The teachers are a valuable resource and at the forefront for bringing about pedagogical and curricular changes. As professionals, they contribute in imparting quality education and bringing about a qualitative change in the teaching and learning environment of the schools. They play a pivotal role in transmitting equity to their students and assist in removing all types of social and cultural barriers. They are the facilitators of transforming information into knowledge. Being facilitators of knowledge, they need to critically question the society norms of patriarchy and reflect on women's traditionally subordinated position in the society. The schools located in all contexts are an important agency of socialization and has a key role in the growing up process of children. The children are not only introduced to formal education in the school but are provided with several spaces for interaction and informal learning. It is important for the schools to provide requisite spaces for girls and boys to grow up in an enabling environment. For this, the teachers need to analyze their own socialization and attitudes to ensure that the curricular transaction is equitable for boys and girls. This unit will help the teachers understand the importance of gender equality in shaping the personality of boys and girls in their impressionable years and the need for its mainstreaming in the entire schooling ethos.

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## 7.2 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the relevance of gender auditing of classroom transactions.
- create gender sensitive teaching and learning classroom environment.
- create gender sensitive classroom through participation and representation.
- create a change in the power equations of the classroom through participatory methods
- understand the implications of deconstructing and reconstruction of teaching methodologies.

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## 7.3 GENDER AUDITING OF CLASSROOM TRANSACTION

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Gender refers to a socially determined and culturally specific difference between women and men. Gender issues are not just women's issue but they are issues that concern both men and women. The concept of gender as an important social construct is important for planning, managing, and monitoring of classroom processes. For this the issues related to girls and women should be seen in relation to boys and men and should not be seen in isolation.

The gender roles played by both men and women are not determined biologically but by the socio-economic and cultural factors in the society. Women in most societies perform domestic and reproductive activities; in addition, they are involved in unskilled economic productive roles also. This double burden of work, results in heavier work load for women as compared to men. Thus, women work in both paid and unpaid areas and very often in paid work undertaken they are not remunerated. This is perhaps one of the main reasons that they do not find place in our economic surveys. These gender roles are consciously or unconsciously portrayed by teachers and students in the classroom dynamics. For promoting gender equality and making it an achievable goal of classroom processes, there is a need to instill the attitude of valuing women work by children of different age groups.

Children learn a lot from out of school and they constantly encounter situations in which they have to assess and judge involving self, family and society. They have to be provided with the learning situations which will involve unlearning gender both at individual and collective levels. This can be done through pedagogic strategies which deal with as to what is observed in contemporary society and what can be in a gender inclusive society. To make the curriculum transaction gender sensitive it is important to analyze the static and changing roles and position acquired by men and women in different socio-cultural context. Further there is a need to identify and address all forms of diversities and inequalities, to be able to develop and strengthen gender equality in classroom transactions.

Gender auditing of classroom transaction involves the process whereby teacher can examine the type of disparities that exist between boys and girls and analyze how they are constructed through curriculum transaction. Gender audit is done

by teachers to fully understand the gender related gap between boys and girls in the classroom in terms of construction of knowledge and through hidden curriculum. Curriculum transactions include everything that occurs in a learning environment in the teacher learner interaction, the activities and assignments, evaluation and communication.

Hidden curriculum is what students absorb in school which may or may not be a part of the formal course of study for example the interaction of the students with peers, teachers or other adults, how they perceive different people based on class, race, religion or gender. It includes learning that takes place within and outside classroom in an unintended manner. It also includes as to what ideas and behaviours students feel as acceptable or unacceptable. It is usually unacknowledged in formal settings and is assumed that they do not need to change.

In schools, many teachers support traditional gender roles and they praise girls and boys for their “feminine” and “masculine” qualities. There are differences in boys and girls school uniform rules. Girls and boys are asked to help around the school in gender specific roles like boys are asked to help moving the furniture and girls are asked to clean and serve. Even while providing guidance related to subject and careers they may be provided with gender specific advices.

In other curricular activities like sports, boys are encouraged to join boxing, cricket etc. and girls generally play kho-kho, badminton etc. The formal curriculum apparently does not discriminate between boys and girls but the hidden curriculum reinforces stereotyped notion of gender identity through the process of gender socialization.

The gender analysis of classroom transaction both formal and hidden helps the teacher to identify the specific needs and strengths of each student whether boy or girl. This will help in planning and management of classrooms in different settings to ensure equal participation of both boys and girls according to their identified needs and potentials.

The gender based stereotyping in the society is the most common way of portraying gender inequality. The teacher’s forms attitudes based on stereotyping acquired by them during their own upbringing and culture transmissions acquired formally and informally. Teacher thus needs to be gender sensitive herself first for gender auditing of classroom transactions. The teachers should first identify the gender differences experienced in all schooling activities and then analyze the implications of these differences for the planning and implementation of activities in the classroom and outside classroom activities. The tasks assigned to boys and girls based on gender need to be identified and studied in-depth and the gender constraints experienced by both boys and girls related to their participation need to be identified and studied. The teacher can perform the gender auditing of the classroom transaction by answering simple questions like:

- Does she/he segregate girls/boys in the classroom e.g. letting girls sit on one side and boys on the other side of the classroom?
- Does she/he have only one monitor in the class either a girl or a boy?
- Does she/he provide opportunities to both girls and boys to participate in all types of activities?
- Does she/he discourage gender-based distribution of roles and responsibilities in school like asking girls to receive a chief guest and boys to look after arrangements?

- During group activities does she/he separate groups of boys from girls.
- Is any effort made for girls to improve their participation e.g. by asking them to read aloud in class and directing questions at them and encouraging them to answer?
- Does she/he discourage gender based participation of children in games, sports and cultural activities organized in and outside the school?
- Does she/he organize activities to counter negative stereotypes about boys and girls?
- Are there any activities like sports and cultural events organized by him/her or students that tend to eliminate gender-based discrimination and promote gender friendly environment in the school?
- Whether she/he perpetuates traditional behavior in the classroom like calling on boys first and encouraging interruptions, argumentations and other traditionally male behaviours while discouraging girls from the same behaviours?
- Does she/he follow a different pattern of rewards and punishment for boys and girls?
- Does she/he or the school encourage both boys and girls to express their opinions, needs and concerns freely?

**Activity 1**

1. Identify other activities performed by the teacher in a classroom which will help them in gender auditing of classroom transaction.
2. Prepare a checklist of hidden curriculum practices in school from a gender perspective.

**Check Your Progress I**

1. What is the gender auditing of classroom transaction?

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2. What is the hidden curriculum in the classroom?

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3. How can the hidden curriculum be made gender sensitive?

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## 7.4 APPROACHES FOR CREATING GENDER SENSITIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

It is a well-known fact the gender is a cross cutting concern across all disciplines and is basic to the construction of knowledge. The knowledge which has been shaped in every discipline and through the medium of language makes the inequalities of gender seems natural. It is important to critically challenge this and deconstruct this knowledge for redressing the inequities.

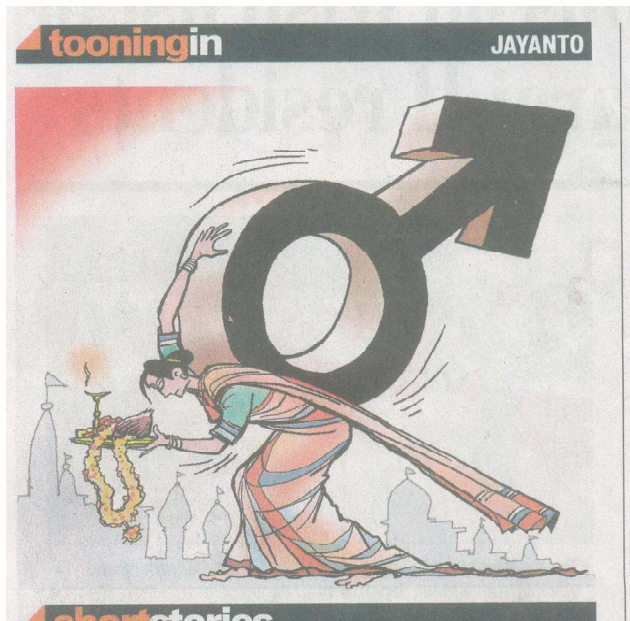
Discriminatory traditions and practices that exist in any society are sustained because of the prejudicial attitudes of the people of the society and language used. These attitudes are influenced by one's own socio-cultural environment. The teacher should help students to reflect on their personal value systems and perceptions of gender issues. Discussions can be held on certain statements like.

- Men are the heads of households and all decisions related to the family should be taken by them.
- Men and women should be equal partners in all development processes.
- A women's place is home and she should concentrate on household chores and child rearing activities.
- Men and women should share household responsibilities and decisions
- Women should have same rights and opportunities as men.
- Discussion can be held on the cartoons given below on the rights of women to pray in religious places.



*Source:* Hindustan Times, 30 January 2016

Discussions should also be held on prevailing attitudes and whether gender roles are static or do they change with time and place. The people's values are all influenced/conditioned by the society in which they live. Values are attached to the roles of women and men. As roles are not biologically determined but are determined by socio-economic and cultural conditions they can change. When roles change the personal value, system also needs to change.



Source: H.T. 27 May 2016

The education of girls and women is considered as important for supplementary income generation, reducing fertility rate and thus controlling population and for better family upkeep. They have never been seen as individual human beings or having their own identity. This also shapes our education system and classrooms. The curriculum presentation of gender relations is very often based on the ideas perpetuated by the dominant group i.e. males. The contributions, capacities and perspectives of women are very rarely recognized independently. To generate awareness among the students on gender sensitivity, the following activities can be conducted in the classroom.



Source: H.T, Wednesday, June 08, 2016

- Teacher can ask the students to critically analyze the newspaper clipping as to how gender analysis does not operate in vacuum-it always works in tandem with forces of caste, class and religion.

- An activity can be done to make the students understand that differences between men and women can lead to creation of constraints for both girls and boys. The activity will focus on the fact that this difference is not based on biological differences but created due to socialization. The boys and girls can be asked to write the characteristics common to men and women, three exclusively male characteristics and three exclusively female characteristics. Since there are no exclusive male characteristics that no woman has and vice versa in an ideal situation student should not come up with any characteristics in the second and third options. However, some students may write same characteristics exclusively for male and female. Discussions should be held to question the barrier between the feminine and the masculine which limits the self-development of both girls and boys. Discussions should be held on as to what are the biggest differences between individual people regardless of their sex or between girls and boys. These differences may influence the occupational choice or life priorities of individuals.
- Girls and boys can be asked to name the characteristics which are typically female or typically male. They will also think about advantages and disadvantages that male and female characteristics confer upon being men and women. Discussions can be held on how many and what kind of constraints are related to the traditional stereotype of the male role for men and female role for women. Which constraints would the girls and boys would like to eliminate and how.
- Students can also be asked to bring newspaper clipping showing men and women engaging in various activities. These activities can be categorized as most frequent “men’s and women’s” activities. Then the students may be asked to modify them in which women will do the male activities and vice versa. Students can be motivated to create the pictures depicting women doing “typical male” activities and men doing “typically female” activities, for example a muscular man holding a baby. This will lead children to understand that most activities can be done easily by both women and men.

In all activities related to reflection of one’s own gender role it is very important not to judge students’ statements and thus avoid labeling. For children, many experiences can be painful or they may find difficult to speak about their own life and family. It is therefore better to use an approach where children can use other examples from media or historic personalities. Once the children articulate stereotypes in their own words then there should be discussions about the stereotype’s alternatives. It is also important that for the teacher to know that while conducting activities it is important to foster a discussion where everyone is involved. Discussions should be done with an open mind and with respectful approach.

While forming groups for the activities whether to form mixed group boys and girls or single sex group will depend on the theme and the type of discussion we want to have with students. If a discussion is held on a theme of gender roles than a more free and open discussion can be held if it is a single sex group of boys and girls. In a separate group, there is a higher chance to get to the root of the gender stereotype restraining the lives of girls and boys. They can better and more openly focus on their own gender role rather than on that

of opposite sex. In mixed groups, the gender role discussion lapses into some kind of competitions as to who is better and who is worse. The results of the group discussions should be presented in diverse ways like verbal summarization, through posters, role plays, pantomime etc.

### 7.4.1 Gender Sensitivity through Teaching of Languages

Language is a valuable tool for expressing and reinforcing gender stereotypes and teacher's verbal statements should be gender sensitive. When we speak about important personalities one should explicitly say that important personalities are both men and women. We should speak about female writers, rulers, or scientists etc. When we speak about house hold chores it should not be presumed that it is only women's task but it should be emphasized that it is both women and men who can carry them out. If the text books have gender stereotypical language teachers can motivate the students to modify the text and make it gender sensitive. In a language, a lot of stereotype adjectives are used for men and women who portray them as masculine and feminine. The adjectives used for women are: adorable, charming, sweet, lovely, divine, beautiful, submissive, gentle, emotional, affectionate, soft hearted, talkative, weak, appreciative, attractive, dependent, sentimental and the adjectives used for men are: cool, terrific, great, adventurous, creative, energetic, aggressive, ambitious, assertive, confident, courageous, daring, handsome, independent, logical, rational, self-confident, robust, strong, tough, unemotional etc.

Language cuts across all disciplines and is basic to the construction of knowledge; as a result, it has wide ranging implications for gender relations. The generic use of word man in language designates all humans. Similarly, women are traditionally known by their relational category either by their father's or husband's name or as mother of, sister of daughter of etc. Therefore, it is important to sensitize students to the way language functions and how it naturalizes power difference. It does not merely project which already exists but also shapes our attitudes towards it. Thus using language differently can actually change conditions and situations. While knowledge construction and concept formation from a gender perspective in teaching of languages, the following points should be kept in mind:

- Use of sexist language should be avoided and communication should be done using gender sensitive language in the classroom
- Use language in such a way that it develops a sense of mutual respect and dignity, cooperation and sharing among boys and girls
- Encourage children to speak about their personal experiences from home to school giving equal opportunity to both girls and boys
- Teacher can tell real stories of local role models of brave women, educated women, women writers/poets, women entrepreneurs, eminent and talented women using their own local resources such as newspapers, magazine etc.

### 7.4.2 Gender Sensitivity through Teaching of Mathematics

It is a common myth that Mathematics is not for girls. Another view is that the syllabus of Mathematics and its teaching does not have any scope of gender discrimination and stereotyping. It is important to break this myth through our curriculum and its transaction by the teachers.



While doing knowledge construction and concept formation in mathematics following points should be kept in mind -

- Use both men and women pronouns/pictures to introduce a unit or concept.
- Work at the home is equally important and productive and should be projected (through mathematical problems) as a responsibility to be shared by all members of the family.
- Dignity of work in all walks of life should be reflected through exercises projecting computation of time, labor, and energy consumed at each job.
- Reinforce growing participatory roles of women/girls in all works of life. Depict women/girls in no-traditional, new occupational roles such as women as managers, traders, executive, businesswomen, driving their own vehicles, pilots, scientists, mathematicians, industrialists etc.
- Show both women and men in problems/visuals related to money transaction e.g. buying, selling and as owners of property.
- Highlight through mathematical illustrations that both sexes have equal right in the family property.
- Develop decision making competence in both boys and girls equally through teaching of mathematics.
- Explain through mathematical problems that female population is less than male population in our country and the declining sex ratio.

### 7.4.3 Gender Sensitivity through Teaching of Environmental Studies (EVS)

Environmental studies are integration of nature with human beings which makes students to interact with social and physical environment as a whole. EVS teaches them to become sensitive towards their life, their rights and duties, caring and sharing, respect for each other, etc. while doing knowledge construction and transaction of EVS it should be seen that –

- Physical attributes and differences do not reflect superiority or inferiority. There should not be any discrimination between boys and girls being different in physical attributes. Care should be taken to note individual differences in capabilities, abilities and aptitudes of children.
- Basic body structures, functions and requirements are also similar for both boys and girls therefore, no discrimination should be made in providing food, health care and learning experiences.
- Avoid portraying women and men in stereotypical roles e.g. women fetching water, cooking, looking after children and men working outside homes in offices and fields.
- In visuals show persons in various economic activities e.g. scientists, as women because women are also contributing in these activities.
- While teaching EVS involve girls in conducting experiments, practical activities. If they are hesitant for any reason, encourage them, motivate them to ask questions.

- Collect information about eminent women who may be scientists, historians, social workers, panchayat members, activists, local leaders etc. and give their examples at relevant places while teaching EVS. This will motivate girls to continue their education and may help in developing a positive self-concept among them.
- Preservation and conservation of the Habitat is responsibility of all.

#### **7.4.4 Teacher as a Counselor for Creating Gender Sensitivity**

The teacher cannot just define his/her role as a knowledge giver but she/he needs to be a facilitator of knowledge and act as a counselor for overall development of the students. Both boys and girls face challenges, problems and difficulties in their lives. But the girl child faces them more due to the societal expectations and she being a girl. Teacher should act as a counsellor to guide girls and boys for their social and psychological development. For this the teacher can take-up the activity given below as a starting point.

Collect information about the students, which can be done through simple group activity by making mixed groups of both boys and girls in the classroom and by asking them to write individually on a sheet of paper, their personal information their strengths, their weaknesses and parental expectations. Brain storming can be done on the responses obtained for boys and girls. This will provide a gender analysis of the differences that occur in that stage of life and help the teacher to perform his/her duties as a counselor in an effective manner.

It is important for the teacher to know that not all problems can be solved by the teacher but at least she/he can develop among students a positive attitude for dealing with the problems. She/he should help the students to arrive at a solution rather than solving the problem on her own.

The adolescent girls need greater counseling as they have to cope with psychological and physical changes occurring due to puberty. There are certain beliefs and restrictions due to the menstrual cycle like not going to the temple or talking to boys freely. All these impact the self-concept of girls and require help from the teacher. As a counselor, it is important for the teacher to keep his/her personal biases aside and address the problem from the students' perspective.

The teacher must be careful and sensitive while responding so as not to pass wrong messages to the students for e.g. when girls are fighting among themselves the teacher might say do not fight like boys. When the boys get emotional, the teacher might say do not cry like girls. The teacher should be gender sensitive and not pass such messages. The issues should be handled in such a way that they develop a positive attitude towards the other gender.

In some cases, it is possible that students who are a part of the classroom have already been confronted with some negative implications of gender stereotypes like gender based violence, sexual harassment or pressures to confine to set norms of being masculine and feminine, thus it is necessary to approach these issues with sensitivity. The teacher should counsel and mentor both female and male learners with regard to the continuation of their studies, job perspective and psycho-social needs. This support should be provided in a gender sensitive way so that both boys and girls do not choose stereotyped paths. For instance,

**Gender and Pedagogic Practices** girls should not select subjects traditionally regarded as being more “feminine” or boys should not select subjects that are regarded as being more “masculine”.

### **Activity 2**

1. What other approaches according to you can make knowledge construction in classroom gender sensitive?
2. Gender cuts across all disciplines; analyze the other disciplines like history, Geography, Economics etc. from a gender perspective .

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## **7.5 PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION AS VALUES OF GENDER SENSITIVE CLASSROOM**

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The construction of the female learner as passive may act against her within the participatory teaching and learning context. In the name of classroom discipline a strict division is maintained between girls and boys and a girl who is interactive is pulled up for transgressing the ‘gender code’. Changes in curriculum and classroom organization through participation and representation of girls and women will help in creating gender sensitive environment. In participatory activities, all children can sit on the floor to reinforce equality. They can be engaged in small group work of mixed genders or in mixed pairs. Equality can be modeled through planning and performing activities together. Girls are generally shy and do not open in front of boys but group participatory activities will help in breaking this. In private girls behave with a certain kind of freedom but when they are in public or around boys their behavior change is significant. This would instill in them confidence to do things in front of boys.

Boys and girls should be equal partners in participation and in decision making. Girls generally lack self-confidence because of the low valuation of their work as a result they are hesitant to assume leadership roles. They need to be motivated to take up these leadership roles.

The girls and boys together can play snake and ladder kind of games to understand the different forms of hurdles faced by girls and boys.

For participation and representation as a value for Gender Sensitive Classroom the teacher should-

- Break down hierarchies and power networks that exclude girls and women.
- Development of greater understanding and conditions which lead to bullying, sexism and homophobic behavior.
- Value pupils’ experience and knowledge and have closer involvement of students in planning and evaluating their educational work.
- React cautiously to unfriendly and potentially gender-biased attitudes that learners may demonstrate towards other female and male learners. Help learners question these attitudes in order to prevent them from happening in the future

- Give both female and male learners an equal opportunity to write on the writing board and to present their work or answers to the class.
- Give similar duties to both female and male learners (example cleaning, moving furniture, etc.)
- Support and encourage both female and male learners to be class leaders, possibly having one female and one male as co-leaders.
- If possible rearrange the structure of the classroom seating. This will help in developing an informal and personal connection among students in the classroom.
- Use materials that portray female and male characters in equal numbers and involved in similar activities. If not, the teacher should try to call on learners and help them challenge stereotypes in the portrayal of female and male characters in the teaching/learning materials used
- Display posters on the walls that portray female and male characters in equal numbers and involved in activities together
- Give all students equal attention in advising and mentoring and don't overlook capable but quiet students.
- There are gender differences in communication styles. All the students should be encouraged to participate. In general boys respond to the question more confidently, aggressively and quickly. They are more spontaneous in the class. The girls on the other hand wait longer to respond to questions in class, choosing their words and constructing the answers before speaking.
- Be careful in whom to call upon and how to respond to their questions and answers. React positively to the responses of both boys and girls. All the students should be encouraged to respond. Give each student equal attention and equally specific feedback.
- While curriculum transaction care should be taken to use gender neutral language and attempt should be made to learn all students' names. Try and highlight the contributions of women in all walks of life, this will provide female students with a greater feeling of connection and inclusion. Revise curricula if necessary to include female experiences and to include them in more than just stereotypical ways.
- The students should be encouraged to learn in cooperative small group which is an effective strategy for motivation and achievement of students. The project works and class assignments can be given in groups which will encourage students to work together as a team. Monitor classroom dynamics to ensure that discussion does not become dominated by verbally aggressive students.
- Educators have reported that there is a general decline in school performance among girls entering adolescence that can be related to the decline in the self-esteem of girls as they attain puberty. Thus teachers need to identify this and help girls to come out of it.

**Activity 3**

Identify different participatory activities which can be conducted to make the classroom gender sensitive.

Empower boys with skills to overcome their gender oppressive attitudes and behaviours such as machoism, bullying, sexual affronts.

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## **7.6 CHANGING POWER EQUATIONS IN CLASSROOM**

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It is very important for the teacher to assert that equality involves developing in the learner the ability to question the relation of power in the society. A teacher through gender sensitive pedagogy can help in changing power equations in the classroom. While teaching he/she should take care as to whose knowledge is more valued and who can speak. Encouraging a child to speak in class may be important for some children and learning to listen to others may be of priority to others. A teacher's role is to provide a safe space for children to express themselves and at the same time initiate a healthy interaction. An atmosphere of trust would make the classroom a safe space where children can be acknowledged and where resolutions can be mutually worked out. A space where they can practice informal ways to interact with each other and build skills to negotiate with conflicts outside the school. Particularly for girls the classrooms should be spaces to encourage decision making, to question the bases of their decision and to make informed choices.

Considering female learners as passive may act against them within the participatory teaching and the learning contexts. Schools generally in the name of classroom discipline propagate gender based constructions where strict divisions are maintained between boys and girls. A girl who is interactive is discouraged as her behaviour does not fit in the gender code.

The teachers can address the power relations in classroom more effectively by understanding the social milieu of the students and making them unlearn any biased form of socialization. While teaching, teachers must be aware of the socio-cultural practices prevalent in the areas from where the students come from and even about the locales and surroundings area near the school. Schools and classrooms should not be closed structures and there is a need to reach out to the community and nearby locality to make knowledge construction gender sensitive.

The teachers can themselves gather information about the gender perceptions of the community and try to sensitize the community with the help of students. The students can gather information about the work done by men and women in the locality and discussions can be held regarding it. There may be a source of water like lake, tube well, hand pump etc. in the village. The students can collect information regarding the use of water source by men and women and the gender division of labour related to water and who gets more affected by it, which will help to raise crucial questions on power relations.

The teacher can bring newspaper/magazine articles into the classroom and discuss the issues raised in them. They can watch serials, films and popular programs

and develop media analysis skills. Let students say just what they feel and think, encourage them to simply express and articulate. Debates can be facilitated related to violence which will exercise their minds and emotions. Teacher can ask the students to hold group discussions in a participatory manner on the articles below with their family members as to-

- Whether treating women as witches in society is just.
- Whether a crime like rape can be pardoned by just touching the feet of the survivor.

## Justice a distant dream for these 'witches'

**HTSPECIAL**

Deep Mukherjee  
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**BHILWARA:** The wrinkled face of Mangi Bai Kumawat doesn't twitch anymore as she recounts the horrors of the day in 2014 when she was accused of being a daayan or witch and branded with red-hot iron rods.

Instead, a forlorn expression clouds the face of the elderly lady who, like many other women in Bhilwara district of Rajasthan, has little hope of getting justice.

Bhilwara has recorded most number of witch-hunting cases over the years in the state. Many cases were pending in courts and the accused were out of jail.

"Some of them held me forcibly while the others branded my hands, abdomen and... with rods. They called me a witch and told me to get out of the village," Mangi Bai said and showed the scars.

Since the attack occurred before the 2015 Rajasthan anti-witch-hunting legislation was introduced, her case in court doesn't mention that she was branded a witch and cast out of the village.

Jagdish Damami lost his mother Prem Devi in 2010 after she was stoned to death by villagers who accused her of being a witch. "My mother went to work as a labourer at a ceremony of upper-caste people. After the function she asked for payment. Instead, they accused her of being a witch; took her near the edge of the village and stoned her to death," he said.

He alleged that the killers usurped her property later.

Jagdish and his brother haven't been able to return to their village. "The property has been occupied by families of the people who killed my mother and we can't go back home," he said.

Most often the victims are widows or women with no male relatives to look after them. As a result, villagers connive with local ascetics to brand them witches and usurp their property.

But not all are defenceless without any family support.

Bholi Devi was branded a witch in Dariba 12 years ago and a panchayat attended by community elders of three villages decided that she must leave the place for good. Now, Bholi Devi and her family live in Bhilwara city. They were forced to leave and sell their ancestral home in Dariba.

Her 33-year-old daughter-in-law, Hemlata Bishnoi, wonders why only women are called as daayans. "Why can't men be ghosts or wizards?"

Men are not spared too, in case they tried to help a 'witch'. A decade ago, village sarpanch Banshi Kumawat helped a distant relative, Gulabi Bai Kumawat, who was called a witch and her property usurped in Borda village. After 11 years, he was still visiting the courts.

"I had to sell 32 bighas of my land to meet the expense of court cases but this woman hasn't got justice yet," said Banshi, pointing at a 95-year-old frail veiled figure.

The 66-year-old Banshi said he would write to the government. "I will request the chief minister to either help us get justice or to give permission for euthanasia for both of us because this is also a slow death that we have been dying for the past 11 years."

**Gulabi Bai Kumawat breaks down as she recounts her long struggle for justice after being labelled a witch.**  
HIMANSHU VIJAY/HT



Source: HT, Wednesday, July 27, 20

## Panchayat 'frees' rapist as he touches survivor's feet

Mrigank.Tiwari@timesgroup.com

**Bareilly:** In a shocking decision, a local panchayat in Bareilly pardoned an alleged rapist after making him touch the survivor's feet. The entire incident happened in front of a police station. After senior officials came to know of it, a complaint was lodged and an investigation was started.

The survivor, a 30-year-old widow, was working at a levelling project under the MGNREGS at a forested area in Meergunj tehsil on January 28. She was alone at the work site after her fellow workers left for lunch.

The accused, a rozgar sevak named Rohtash, 32, who was in charge of the workers arrived at the spot on a bike. Seeing her alone, he allegedly dragged her to an isolated spot and raped her, threatening to kill her if she reported the assault.

The survivor, later, went to Meergunj police station to lodge a complaint. The constables on duty allegedly refused to entertain her complaint and called up the village pradhan instead, who arrived at the spot with the accused.

The pradhan then called for a panchayat right outside the police station, where Rohtash was ordered to touch the woman's feet.

The panchayat then declared that the alleged rapist was pardoned and asked the survivor to keep mum about the crime.

The survivor then brought the entire matter to the notice of superintendent of police (SP) rural areas Brijesh Srivastava, who reprimanded Meergunj police and directed them to lodge a complaint. "The matter was brought to my notice and I have instructed the circle officer (CO) to investigate the matter. If the allegations are found to be true, strict action will be taken against the accused as well as the panchayat members," Srivastava told TOI.

**UP police refused to file an FIR after the rape survivor came to a police station in Bareilly. They instead summoned the village pradhan, who called for a panchayat right outside the station. The accused was let off after he was 'ordered' to touch the woman's feet**



Source: TOI 4 Feb. 2016

The students can be taken to slum areas for evolving strong response and awareness. They have to be provided with emotional support which will help them in voicing anger, pain, frustration, as well as joys, dreams and hopes. By this they will learn to work through issues and developing balance. Issues need to be raised in a very gentle way, creating a safe space for sharing. At the same time not threatening their identities and comfort zones.

Teachers can without being patronizing or condescending, praise and encourage girls in their work and extend invitations for further assistance as needed. There should be a zero-tolerance policy with clear punitive measure for gender-based teasing and harassment in the class and outside the class. To make students understand the power equations in the society which in turn will help them to change the par equations in the classroom, the teacher can ask the students to perform the following activities.

- Students can be asked to imagine themselves in shoes of others like boys can imagine themselves in the roles of the girls and girls in the roles of boys. Discussions can be held as to – How they are going to behave in the family, school, sports and other activities. What would they want to do which they could not do while they were a girl/boy? Would they like to stay in this situation, why and why not?
- Two mixed groups can be made in the classroom and create a scene where the students must visit their relatives house for a function of a new born baby. The baby is small and they have not seen the baby. The only thing they know is that she is a girl and her name is Khanak. The second group will be told that the baby is boy and his name is Mihir. What present would they be giving to them as a girl or a boy, which kind and colour clothes, which toys, which kind of other things. Discuss as to why they thought that these presents are good for Khanak and Mihir.
- Students can be asked to analyze the way men and women are depicted in both print and non-print media. They can identify the kinds of activities women and men do in advertisements. What products men and women are promoting? What jobs men and women are doing in media portrayal? They also may identify the stereotypical qualities of women and men being stressed upon in the media. There can also be discussion of some of the media portrayal which shows breaking of gender stereotypes.
- Teachers can ask the students to analyze the following news items and hold discussions as to how it will help in breaking gender stereotypes.





Source: H.T. 16.11.2015

We can speak with students about the extent of differentiation of ideas about men and women in literature, film, fine arts and in everyday life. Discussions can be held on the implications of one-sided representation of men and women in the lives of people.

- Students should be made to understand that though we are both women and men but first we are human beings. For this the students should be asked to describe the characteristics of a human being to an alien from another planet. Some of the students may give more "Male" characteristics as a human being's characteristics. This will help the students to uncover the seeming gender neutrality that for being a human being is equivalent to usually being a man and that woman's experiences are less visible. This can be further extended to the invisibility of women's experiences in textbooks, media and other sources.
- The students can work with their textbooks with a lens of gender sensitivity so that they can see how textbooks represent men and women. Discussions can be held on how men and women are depicted and how frequently they occur in content, visuals and illustrations. The kind of roles they are depicted in who is missing from the textbook and in which situation they can be included occur in it. Discussions can also be held on whether the characters and situations in the textbook are identical to or different from real life. What implications can the one-sided depiction of certain groups of people have. What stereotypes does this one-sided depiction of women and men boys and girls reinforce? We can speak about diversities of everyday life that is often missing from textbook for example fathers taking care of babies, female scientists, female pilots, diverse types of families a single mother, families with adopted childless children's couples, transgender families. The rights of the transgender people can be discussed through some newspaper articles as given below:





Source: H.T.16 April 2015



Source: H.T. 11 November 2014

**Activity 4**

Try and analyze how power equations make the play in school gendered.

**7.7 IMPLICATIONS OF DECONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF TEACHING METHODOLOGY**

In the past few years there has been a constant effort by the feminist critiques to expand the boundaries of knowledge across disciplines by including the issues related to gender and other social inequalities such as caste, class and religion. There is a need to have insights into the nature of power and hierarchy analysis of the importance of gender division of labour, the division between public and private and re-valuing of women’s experiences. The linkages between gender and curriculum are complex and challenging and unless the textbooks and teaching methodologies incorporate gender perspectives, the curriculum will portray gender biases. Therefore, it is important for the teacher to recognize the importance of gender and ensure that gender perspective is incorporated in the teaching methodologies so that the students imbibe the value of gender equality.

The engagement of student and teacher in the classroom is important as it has the power to define whose knowledge will become a part of school related knowledge and whose voice will be more heard in shaping this knowledge. The students should not just be observers but should be the part of the discussions and solving issues related to their education. It is necessary to develop their mental skills and make them reason independently. The teacher will have to deconstruct her own teaching methodology according to the need of the students especially for children from underprivileged backgrounds especially girls as the world they inhabit and their realities are underrepresented. The teacher will have to reconstruct such methodology like participatory teaching and learning which involves subjectivity, emotions and experiences of the students, which will help the child to critically understand her surroundings and empower herself. Though participation is a powerful teaching methodology but the teacher has to be cautious in using it often as the teacher's own ideas dominate classroom discussions and it may not be meaningful for the students. It should involve appreciation of experiences of both students and teachers. Real participation works with the principle or recognizing differences. The students share and reflect on their individual differences along with this they also relate the experiences of others who may not be sometimes a part of their social reality.

The students should also be made to learn from conflict as strategy. Students face conflicts related to violence of various kinds, like child sex abuse, seeing domestic violence at home, communal violence and violence at school in the form of bullying. They may even face conflict with their own self, performance in examination, parents' expectations and other adolescent issues. The students come with their own socialization and conflicts to the classroom. Conflict becomes an important part of their lives. They constantly find themselves in situations where moral judgments are passed by the family and the society. The knowledge given in the curriculum is neutral and does not deal with these conflicts. The teacher should provide with alternate ways of dealing with such conflicts both at the individual and collective levels. Especially related to gender the students need to deal with the idea of conflict between what is observed and valued in contemporary society in the social worlds that children inhabit and what can be in a gender equal and world with less of violence.

The students can be asked to respond to following picture which shows the zeal with which the girls are going to school and the boy in the picture is smiling.



If a teacher is teaching a topic in the class and the students critically question the received knowledge the teacher should be able to reconstruct her teaching methodology by group discussions or other participatory learning methods which will encourage the learners to comment, compare and think about elements that exist in their own environment. It is essential to equip students to read against the grain, whether it is a biased text book or any other literacy sources in their own environments. They can even use songs as a powerful medium of discussion, comment and analysis in cultures that are primarily oral. As the repositories of knowledge exist in different mediums, all these forms whether television, advertisements, songs, paintings etc. can be used for creating a dynamic interaction among the learners themselves.

The implications that arise from such teaching methodologies differ in different educational settings based on location, background of learners and different subjects. Reconstruction of such methodology results in changes in curriculum and classroom organization which results in the increased participation of girls and women and other underrepresented groups of students. It helps in questioning the curriculum and breaking down of hierarchies and power networks that exclude girls and women as pupils or teachers. There is a greater understanding of the conditions which lead to bullying, racism, violence and other unruly behavior. The teachers can start valuing students' experiences and knowledge and involve students in planning and evaluating their educational work. There is an increase in critical consciousness among students and they can challenge narrowed conceptions, prejudices and stereotypes. Thus, deconstructing and reconstructing teaching methodology will help provide space for individual students to express themselves freely in the classroom, without fear of judgment and stereotyping.

**Activity V**

Reading against the grain is an important methodology for deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge. Give some examples as to how it can be used to make the classroom gender sensitive.

**Check Your Progress II**

- 4. How can gender sensitivity be promoted through teaching of different disciplines?  
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- 5. How can a teacher change power equation in the classroom?  
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## 7.8 LET US SUM UP

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Gender as we all know cuts across all disciplines and is basic to the construction of knowledge. The critical challenge is of deconstructing the knowledge that portrays inequalities of gender. This can be done through analytical participatory and pro-active pedagogical strategies in the classroom. Approaches that equally reflect the life worlds of both girls and women make visible the invisible and will help in changing power equations in the classroom. Pedagogy should move from a transmission mode to a more affirming participatory and a dialogical interaction between the teacher and the students. This is necessary for recognizing the needs of girls and other marginalized students and for creating a learning environment in which their voices are heard. The pedagogy must incorporate conflict as transitional strategy in the classroom.

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## 7.9 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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1. Reflect upon your own classroom processes from a gender perspective as discussed in the module.
  - Have there been any situations in your life where you have questioned the gender norms?
  - What approaches have been used by you in your classrooms that encourage learners to comment, compare and think about elements that exist in their own-environment?
  - Analyze any teaching learning material used by you from a gender perspective.

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## 7.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Gender auditing of classroom transaction involves the processes whereby the teacher can examine the type of disparities that exist between boys and girls and analyze how they are constructed through curriculum transaction. It helps in understanding the gender related gaps between boys and girls in the classroom in terms of construction of knowledge and through hidden curriculum. It involves auditing of everything that occurs in a learning environment in the teacher-learner interaction, the activities and assignments, evaluation and communication. It helps the teacher to identify the specific needs and strengths of each student whether a boy or a girl and helps in planning and management of classrooms in different settings to ensure equal participation of both boys and girls according to their identified needs and potentials.
2. Hidden curriculum is what students absorb in school which may or may not be a part of the formal course of study for example the interaction of the students with peers, teachers or other adults, how they perceive different people based on class, caste, religion or gender. It includes learning that takes place within and outside classroom in an unintended manner. It also includes as to what ideas and behaviours students feel as acceptable or unacceptable. It is usually unacknowledged in formal settings and is assumed that they do not need to change.

3. The teacher can ask the girls and boys to help around the school without considering their specific roles like boys can be asked to clean and serve and girls can be asked to help in moving the furniture. In other curricular activities like sports, girls can be encouraged to join boxing; cricket etc. and boys can be encouraged to play kho-kho, badminton etc. The teacher should not segregate boys/girls in the classroom e.g. letting girls sit on one side and boys on the other side of the classroom. There can be two monitors in the class both a boy and a girl.

Equal opportunities should be provided to both girls and boys to participate in all types of activities. Gender-based distribution of roles and responsibilities in school like asking girls to receive a chief guest and boys to look after arrangements should be discouraged. Cultural events and other activities should be organized in schools that tend to eliminate gender-based discrimination and promote gender friendly environment in the school. The teacher should address her own biases like whether she perpetuates traditional behavior in the classroom like calling on boys first and encouraging interruptions, argumentations and other traditionally male behaviours while discouraging girls from the same behaviours.

4. Gender is a concern across all disciplines and should be integrated in all the disciplines of knowledge. Language is a valuable tool for expressing and reinforcing gender stereotypes and a teacher's verbal statements should be gender sensitive. When we speak about important personalities one should explicitly say that important personalities are both men and women. We should speak about female writers, rulers, scientists. When we speak about the house hold chores it should not be presumed that it is only the women's task but it should be emphasized that it is both women and men who can carry them out. If the text books have gender stereotypical language, teachers can motivate the students to modify the text and make it gender sensitive. In language, a lot of stereotype adjectives are used for men and women which portray them as masculine and feminine. Use of sexist language should be avoided and communication should be done using gender sensitive language in the classroom.

In the knowledge construction and concept formation in mathematics the teacher should portray work at the home as important and productive with the help of mathematical problems. Dignity of work in all walks of life should be reflected through exercises projecting computation of time, labor, and energy consumed at each job. Growing participatory role of women/girls in all works of life should be reinforced. Women and girls should be depicted in no-traditional, new occupational roles such as women as managers, traders, executive, businesswomen, driving their own vehicles, pilots, scientists, mathematicians, industrialists etc. Both women and men should be shown in problems/visuals related to money transaction e.g. buying, selling and as owners of property.

Environmental Studies is integration of nature with human beings which makes students to interact with social and physical environment. EVS teaches them to become sensitive towards their life, their rights and duties, caring and sharing and respect for each other. The teacher should emphasize that physical attributes and differences do not reflect superiority or inferiority. There should not be any discrimination between boys and girls because of having different physical attributes. Care should be taken to note individual

differences in capabilities, abilities and aptitudes of children. Basic body structure, functions and requirements are also similar for both boys and girls therefore, no discrimination should be made in providing food, health care and learning experiences. Avoid portraying women and men in stereotypical roles e.g. women fetching water, cooking, looking after children and men working outside homes in offices and fields. In visuals persons should be shown in various economic activities e.g. scientists, as women because women are also contributing in these activities. Information about eminent women who may be scientists, historians, social workers, panchayat members, activists, local leaders etc., can be given which will motivate the girls to continue their education and may help in developing a positive self-concept among them.

5. A teacher through gender sensitive pedagogy can help in changing power equations in the classroom. While teaching she should take care as to whose knowledge is more valued and who can speak. Encouraging a child to speak in class may be important for some children and learning to listen to others may be of priority to others. A teacher's role is to provide a safe space for children to express themselves and at the same time initiate a healthy interaction. An atmosphere of trust would make the classroom a safe space where children can be acknowledged and where resolutions can be mutually worked out. A space where they can practice informal ways to interact with each other and build skills to negotiate with conflicts outside the school. Particularly for girls the classrooms should be spaces to encourage decision making, to question the basis of their decision and to make informed choice.

The teachers can address the power relations in classroom more effectively by understanding the social milieu of the students and making them unlearn any biased form of socialization. While teaching, teachers must be aware of the socio-cultural practices prevalent in the areas from where the students come and even about the locales and surrounding areas near the school. Schools and classrooms should not be closed structures and there is a need to reach out to the community and nearby locality to make knowledge construction gender sensitive.

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## 7.11 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS/ RESOURCES

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1. Creating Gender Equity Through Your Teaching: <http://wrrc.ucdavis.edu/files/misc/genderequity.pdf>
2. Developing Gender Responsive Learning Environments: An IREX Toolkit for Teachers: [https://www.irex-europe.fr/IMG/pdf/Gender\\_and\\_EducationToolkit.pdf](https://www.irex-europe.fr/IMG/pdf/Gender_and_EducationToolkit.pdf)
3. Levto, R. (2014). Addressing Gender Inequalities in Curriculum and Education: Review of Literature and Promising Practices to Inform Education Reform Initiatives in Thailand in Women's Voice and Agency Research Series 2014 No.9, The World Bank.
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5. National Focus Group on Gender Issues in Education, NCERT, New Delhi, 2005
  6. UNGEI. (2012). Gender Analysis in Education: A Conceptual Overview. New York: UNGEI.

#### VIDEOS

- Gender-Responsive Teacher Education: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZuUY4Vwh3k>
- Gender Stereotyping in the Classroom: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i3BFwRG0Id4>
- How to Avoid Gender Stereotypes: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZFNsJ0-aco>
- UNICEF: To Educate a Girl: <http://teachunicef.org/explore/media/watch/educate-girl-feature-length-film>
- Chuppi Todo, Plan India

