

UNIT-3

GENDER AND SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Introduction

Students of both sexes will come to school and enjoy learning if teaching methods and curriculum reflect gender equality. It is responsibility of government to frame policies that promote gender equality in education.

Representation of gender roles in School text books and Curriculum

Generally gender bias gets expressed in text books and curricula in the following two ways:

(i) Content matter: Not giving importance to women achievers and their achievements

(ii) Gender Stereotype: In the concepts and ideas contained in the context.

These are the two ways.

Content matter that find place in text books and curriculum

In a study undertaken by UNESCO, analyzing the content in all subjects at all levels of education in countries across Africa, America, Asia and Europe, it was confirmed that subject content have gender discrimination and gender bias against women.

In general educational textbooks reference about women and their achievements find place only in a small measure; But they find an important place in vocational courses in healthcare and social welfare fields.

- Name of women often get omitted (they are depicted as homemakers, emotional and dependent) Men are depicted as strong in body and mind having power and authority and acting independently.
- Awareness campaigns and training programmes should be conducted on a large scale
- Book publishers and writers should be given suggestions by the government about the ways

to handle gender equality.

In the School Curriculum

History and language lessons provide more opportunities for gender inequality being expressed. For eg: In Tamil text books both in poetry and prose only works of men find place more. Only 10 to 20% of works of women are included.

Men poets from days of Tholkappiar, Bharathiar, Elango, valli, Vairamuthu, Sekizhar, Vairamuthu and Bharathidasan are quoted extensively in Tamil Language Curriculum.

In History subject's Indian history is described from Vedic period (B.C 500) till Independence in our History books. Achievements of emperors like Asoka, Harsha, Akbar, Raja Raja Chola are popularly noted in the lessons of our History text books.

But women's contribution for bringing socio-economic transformations in the life of Indians particularly that of women are highlighted

Mother Teresa, Indira Gandhi, Sarojini Naidu, M.S.Subulakshmi, P.T Usha, Sani Mirza, Dr.Annie Besant. So, Curriculum planners and text book writers do not evince (show) interest in including the women achievers and their contributions and appropriate places in the curriculum at different levels of schooling.

Gender Stereotypes in School text books and Curriculum

Text books used in schools at primary education level:

- Contain pictorial illustrations explaining the gender roles and functions of family members.

Eg: Father reads newspaper sitting on the swing. Elder brother playing with his friend's outside the house Elder sister washing the clothes Mother cooking food in the kitchen Young sister playing with dolls.

The role and functions of women, their dress code, duties and ideal characteristics as portrayed in the ancient books again and again get expressed in the present day books also, ignoring modern trends. This makes the girls believe that their further life centers around marriage, family life, child-care and home management only.

At Secondary education level

Among the few names of women mentioned prominently in Indian history, the following are the important ones:

- Yesodha – the wife of Buddha
- Sangamitra – the Daughter of Emperor Asoka

“Seetha” in the epic Ramayana and “kanngi” the central character of Tamil classic “Silappathikaram” are held in high esteem and worshipped and goddess even today.

At Higher Secondary level

Home management, fine arts, handi crafts and social work are considered suitable subjects of study for girl students. Mathematics, Science, Engineering etc., are taken to be subjects meant for boys.

Similarly management of most schools considers cricket, foot ball, high jump, karate etc., are unsuitable for girls.

Even during social service campus, girls are assigned such work as:

- Preparing and serving food
- Teaching handicrafts to rural women
- Conducting adult education classes etc.,

on the other hand boys are assigned work such as:

- Road- repairing

- Propagating the methods of preventing communicable disease
- Conducting Environmental awareness programme drug addiction, dowry, female infanticide, sexual harassment of women etc.,

Curriculum researchers have identified the following things to be kept in mind while developing a gender equitable curriculum and text books they are:

- Giving equal importance to both genders
- Having positive views and attitude towards both genders
- Acceptance of social roles according to one's own abilities and capacity without any genderdiscrimination

In school text books:

- Equal coverage should be given to the achievements and works of both the genders
- In school curriculum no distinctions should be made in subjects of study as for girls only or boys only
- Both the genders should have choice to select the course, subject streams according to their interest and abilities.

Classroom teachers in their examples and the stories they narrate should portray both men and women are equally bright, courage and creative.

Role of schools in Nurturing or challenging young people as Masculine or Feminine

Feminity or masculinity ones gender identity refers to how far an individual personally feel himself/herself as a male or female and act accordingly.

Femininity and masculinity (gender characteristics) are socially constructed identities. Members of the society join together and decide what it means to be a male or female. But there are possibilities that some women may feel they have more masculine identity and some men feel they have more feminine attributes.

Eg: A man feeling shy in the company of other men, a women laughing or shouting aloud. Gender

Identity is developed in an individual right from birth by various social agencies like family, neighbours, peers etc.,

Gender socialization that takes place in our schools make girls feel that they are not equal to boys, separate seating arrangements for boys and girls, different designs of uniforms, games and sports makes boys and girls feel that they are treated differently.

Schools are key institutions for construction of gender like lining them separately to go for physical education, they are trained how to move and use rest rooms for boys and girls which are available separately, in classroom boys and girls are seated separately.

INTEGRATION OF GENDER ROLES IN SCHOOL AND CURRICULUM

- By including a separate unit on gender in social or civics subjects
- For eg: in Spain primary school curriculum in civics includes lessons on:

(i) Understanding gender differences

(ii) identifying gender inequality at home and in working places

(iii) Promotion of equal rights

(iv) Non- discrimination of gender roles for men and women in the family

In India also birth the gender should be encouraged to participate in games and sports art and literacy competitions. Both boys and girls should be permitted to undertake field trips and educational tours; without showing any discriminations both the gender to be equally encouraged in choice of subjects of study and participation in different co-curricular activities at the senior secondary schools

ROLE OF TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS OPPOSITE GENDER

Gender issues are prevailing in all areas of life in society to reduce them it is essential to Change the mindset of young generation.

At present in our classroom activities teachers unintentionally reinforce traditional gender roles of which the following are important ones:

- (i) Teachers have high expectations of boys achieving well than girls.
- (ii) Teachers put questions only to boys often
- (iii) Teachers wait for long time for male students to answer
- (iv) Feedback also differs
- (v) Teachers help boys to complete the assignments

WAYS OF DEVELOPING POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS OPPOSITE GENDER

- (i) Treating boys and girls equally
- (ii) Directing questions equally to boys and girls
- (iii) Encouraging timid and shy boys and girls
- (iv) Involving educationally backward students too in the classroom interactions
- (v) School/ College functions programmes are to be planned in such a way that the students of both the gender participate equally

GENDER BIAS IN EDUCATION

Gender bias in education refers to treating boys and girls differently in all school activities such as:

- (i) Classroom interactions
- (ii) Text books used
- (iii) Curriculum and Co-Curricular activities
- (iv) Resources and facilities made available to the students.

GENDER ISSUES IN DIVERSE CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS

Gender equality is an important priority for UNESCO's work on heritage, creativity and cultural diversity. The equal participation, access and contribution to cultural life of women and men are human rights as well as cultural rights, and an important dimension for guaranteeing freedom of expression for all. A growing body of evidence from UNESCO programmes points to how gender relations come into play in the transmission of knowledge on heritage and the fostering of creativity. Indeed, ensuring that the spiritual, intellectual and creative expressions and interests of

all members of the community are reflected has proven to be an important enabler of inclusive development and socio-economic empowerment.

Empowering Rural Women

The 30-month project "Empowering Rural Women in the Jordan Valley" started in July 2013. Funded by Drosos Foundation, the project addresses a group of women living in the south of Jordan and is aiming to provide women with innovative income-generating opportunities by improving its production and promotion of handicrafts.

In Japan

Most of the women are well educated and employed with good jobs. They framed the following rights:

- (i) Right of women to own property
- (ii) Right to women to inherent family property
- (iii) Right to women to marry and divorce
- (iv) Right to women to vote in elections

In developing countries like India women do not demand for equal rights as the religious traditions are strong these countries have to wait for democracy. A women becoming Prime Minister or President is not unusual in Eastern countries like India, Srilanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan etc.,

TRANSGENDER: PROVIDNG OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOING LIFE SKILLS

"Transgender" is an umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity or expression does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, a transgender person may identify as a woman despite having been born with male genitalia.

Some of the specific issues facing the transgender community are:

- Lack of legal protection

- Poverty
- Harassment
- Barriers to healthcare
- Identity Documents

The following list of existing schemes/ program on education can be used:

- SSA – Transgender community should be provided free education
- Vocationlisation of Secondary education
- Distance Education
- Coaching Academy
- Scholarships

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRANSGENDER TO GET TRAINED IN LIFE SKILLS

Any skill which is put into use in our daily life is called life skills the following are Important life skills:

- Communication skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Creative thinking
- Decision making skills
- Problem solving skills and controlling emotions

DEVELOPING SCHOOL CURRICULUM FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Gender Bias in School Enrollments

Discrimination based on gender is one of the primary impediments to education. And it affects boys and girls. In some regions, boys' educational opportunities are limited by gender roles that force them to work rather than attend school. These financial responsibilities are often increased in boys' adolescent years, making it difficult for them to complete secondary school in

some regions. However, in many parts of the world, girls are most often the victims of gender discrimination as they pursue an education. Education are the only key to bring Gender equality. Increase in literacy rate should bring equality based on gender but in Indian society gender equality is not yet achieved upto the expected level. Because the roles of gender are taken from the society that plays a root cause for inequality though women are educate.

Points to be kept in mind while framing curriculum for gender equality:

- Achievements of women and their creations should get significant representation in the school curriculum
- There should not be separate courses for women and men
- All educational services and facilities like hostel, toilets, dining hall, play areas and materials for various games, library cycle and scooter stands etc.,
- Role for students admission, disciplinary actions and practices and school uniforms should be appropriate to both the genders
- In group activities of students, there should be no gender discrimination
- Curricular and Co-curricular activities should be made common to both the genders discrimination.

CONCLUSION

Thus students of both sexes will come to school and enjoy learning if teaching methods and curriculum reflect gender equality. So, it is responsibility of the government to frame policies that promote gender equality in education.