

**A GENDER
SENSITIVITY
CURRICULUM BY
SAMAANTA**

AUTHORED BY MAAHIR BHARATRAM





TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR

2. INTRODUCTION TO GENDER BIAS

3. SCHOOL DISCRIMINATION

4. WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

5. GENDERED VIOLENCE

6. HOW GENDER BIAS CAN AFFECT BOYS

MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR

Gender disparity in education, specifically educational access, has been a consistent issue across South Asia for the last several decades. According to a report by UNICEF, this lack of access is closely linked to the “pervasive socio-cultural gender biases in the region” and at the primary level, a reported “5.9 million girls are out of school compared to 5.5 million boys.”

According to that same report, the biggest factor keeping girls out of school is gender discrimination coupled with caste, class, religious and ethnic divisions that pervade the region.

Samaanta ultimately aims to empower young women and reduced gender discrimination across communities in our country. We work to create increased awareness of the hidden biases that exist throughout our society and the impact they have on our younger generation; to implement gender sensitivity training for young boys to help them better understand the issues with pervasive stereotypes that plague our society and their role in assuring the end of gender discrimination across India; and to provide unique opportunities for young women across India to pursue their dreams - academically and professionally!

Through this curriculum, I hope to inculcate important values and lessons for all children- specifically boys- in an effort to create a more equitable society. Our modules are fun, interactive, and educational and 5th and 6th grade- these lessons can be simplified and taught to younger students as well! We are firm believers in the power and education and collective action and hope that together, we can work to build a better society for future generations of women!

Maahir Bharatram

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO GENDER BIAS

ICEBREAKER:

The Global Gender Gap report is a report designed to measure how equal men and women are in different countries across the world. They measure 147 countries - can anyone guess what number India is out of 147?

Get children to line up based on their answer, then show where India would be in the line.

Answer: 109

Group discussion:

What questions come from this? Are people surprised at the answer? Why do they think India is so low on the ranking?

LESSON:

Gender inequality touches many aspects of everyday life. It's not only about the gender pay gap (although it's true that women are paid less in every country in the world). The World Economic Forum predicts that it'll take 108 years to close the current gender gap, no matter how fast we think we're making progress at the moment. It's estimated that 60% of chronically hungry people are female. UN evidence has shown that if women working in agriculture had the same resource access as men, the number of hungry people in the world could be reduced by 12 to 17%.

It stretches to many areas you may not think of: for example, a study by the University of Virginia found that women are 47% more likely to be injured in a car crash because car safety features are designed for men's specifications, not women's. 12 million girls across the world get married each year before the age of 18 - that's 33,000 child brides every day. Even in films, it's been shown that less than a third of speaking characters are women.

Although it's a global issue that impacts everyone, even climate change has been shown to negatively affect women more than men. Although many women work on the land - 43% of agricultural workers are women, men are usually the land owners. That means that when there are natural disasters, often caused by climate change, men can collect funds from the state whereas women can't. Boys are also taught to swim from a younger age, so women are at more risk of drowning in floods.

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTION TO GENDER BIAS

REFLECTION: Find a statistic about gender inequality in India and discuss it with your partner/group. How do you think we've improved in gender equality in the last 100 years? What do you think is the next important step to improve some more?

MODULE 2: SCHOOL DISCRIMINATION

ICEBREAKER: Go around the room and name your favourite subjects at school. Talk about why they're your favourite subjects, and some of the best things you've learned in your study.

Now, how would you feel if someone told you that you couldn't learn these things anymore? Or, even worse, if you never got the opportunity to learn them in the first place? This can be the case for many students in India who don't get the opportunity to go to school because of their gender.

LESSON:

Literacy measures your ability to read and write. There are 796 million illiterate people in the world, and two thirds of them are women. Just 39% of rural girls globally attend secondary school.

There's a big gender gap in literacy in India – for people aged 7 and above, men's literacy rates are 82.14%, but women's literacy rates are 65.46%. This doesn't just impact women's ability to read, but on their lives and the lives of their family. Studies have shown that there are much higher infant mortality rates among illiterate women than literate women – in fact, the longer women have spent in education, the lower the infant mortality rate. There are also higher general mortality rates for illiterate women.

Every year that a girl spends in primary school increases their future wage by 10-20%, and it's been shown that they also become less vulnerable to violence and marry later.

In August 2009, the Indian government passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, which encouraged parents to enrol their children in school. This made a big difference for girls' education – the percentage of girls aged 11-14 out of school went from 10.3% in 2006 to 4.1% in 2018. The same went for older girls: the percentage out of school dropped from over 20% to 13.5%. However, this is still a big proportion of girls who aren't going to school.

Why is this? One factor is housework. In households where the mother works, the burden often falls on the daughter to take on the burden of housework. A study in 2015 by McKinsey showed that women in India do 10 times more unpaid care work than men. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights says that 40% of 15-18 year old girls are out of school, and two thirds of these girls are doing household work.

MODULE 2: SCHOOL DISCRIMINATION

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Name one negative of women being illiterate

Name one benefit of girls being in primary school

What proportion of 15-18 year old girls who are out of school are doing housework?

What percentage of girls globally attend secondary school?

How much more housework do women do in India than men?

REFLECTION ACTIVITY: PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Everyone in the class is running to be Prime Minister of India. They have to present to the rest of the class what measures they would put in place to encourage girls to go to school. The class votes for who they think has the best ideas.

MODULE 3: WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

ICEBREAKER:

A father and son are in a horrible car crash that kills the dad. The son is rushed to the hospital; just as he's about to go under the knife, the surgeon says, "I can't operate—that boy is my son!" Explain.

Answer: the surgeon is the boy's mother.

Well done if you got this right! In a study where they gave this riddle to a range of different people, they found that people from all walks of life struggled to come up with the right answer. Even feminists and people with mothers as doctors got the answer wrong. Why do we think it's so difficult to imagine that the surgeon is a woman? Do you think there's some jobs that are for men, and some that are for women? Why?

[Discussion - challenge reasoning for stereotypes surrounding jobs]

TEACHING:

Now, what would you think if I got [student 1] and [student 2] to the front of the class, and I said I'd pay them if they moved the table for me. However, I then gave [student 1] 100 rupees, and [student 2] only 80? Would that be fair?

This is the reality for men and women in India, where women are paid around 20% less than men for the same job. This means that by October 20th, women have been paid as much as men would be for the whole year.

So there's two levels to this: people assuming that there are some jobs that men do better than women, and women being paid less for doing the same job as men. Do we think there's a connection between these two things?

[Discussion: do stereotypes about jobs contribute to why women are paid less for the same tasks?]

What are some things that we think could happen to help women be paid the same amount of money as men?

MODULE 3: WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

Some suggestions:

Legal action by the government

Fewer stereotypes about women doing certain jobs

More women getting to go to school - link back to module 2

REFLECTION ACTIVITY: POPULAR CULTURE

Get into pairs and discuss positive examples you've seen in your life, in the media, in politics, film, TV etc. where you've seen women in careers that may traditionally have been filled by men.

What impact do you think this positive representation can have on younger people watching?

Have you ever been inspired into a certain career by something you've seen on TV or in real life?

Make an essential "watch list" for those interested in gender equality for films & TV shows with powerful women.

MODULE 4: GENDERED VIOLENCE

ICEBREAKER: How do we express ourselves when we're feeling sad/angry? Have you ever resorted to hitting or kicking? Do you think it's more common to use physical violence if you're a boy than a girl? What differences have you noticed in how boys and girls express themselves?

LESSON:

India has been ranked one of the world's most dangerous countries for women by a Thomson Reuters poll. Violence against women continues to rise in India, with 30% of women between the ages of 15-49 in the country having experienced physical violence. 6% of the same age group have been victims of sexual violence. Around a third of married women in India have experienced violence from their spouses, whether that be physical, emotional or sexual.

Although all this violence exists, 99% of sexual violence in India goes unreported.

India's government has put some new laws into action, with stricter consequences for sexual assault. And some states in India, like Rajasthan, have put in the death penalty for the rape of minors under the age of 12.

Gender-based violence affects women's lives even more than you'd think, with studies showing that women who have been assaulted are less likely to be able to care for their children and to earn a living, and the assault can hugely affect their physical and mental health. Often in India women are stigmatised for being sexually assaulted, which means they can become isolated from their communities, which worsens their mental health.

The good news is that what we're doing now can help: studies have shown that boys and men learning about gender equality and gendered violence can help prevent this violence in the future. According to the National Family Health Survey in India, almost half of men in India agreed that there's a good reason to hit or beat their wife. Men who defined themselves as "rigidly masculine" were three times more likely to be violent towards their partner. By learning about how this can negatively affect women's lives, hopefully more boys will be encouraged not to perpetuate this violence in the future.

MODULE 4: GENDERED VIOLENCE

QUESTIONNAIRE:

What percentage of women 15-49 in India have experienced physical violence?

Name one consequence of violence upon women

What proportion of men in India think there's a good reason to hit or beat their wife?

Why can women who've experienced violence become isolated from their communities?

What is a contributing factor to the likelihood of men being violent towards their partners?

REFLECTION: Discuss with the class ways to solve conflict without using violence. How can we make women in India more comfortable coming forward about cases of violence?

MODULE 5: HOW GENDER BIAS CAN AFFECT BOYS

ICEBREAKER:

Have you ever been told not to do something because it's too "girly"? An activity you liked, or a feeling like being sad and crying? How did that make you feel? Write down an example of when this has happened to you and how it affected you.

LESSON:

We found out earlier that India ranks 109 out of 147 countries in gender equality. Iceland ranks number 1. This might make you think that Iceland is only great for women, but funnily enough men in Iceland have the highest life expectancy in Europe.

We've learned a lot about how gender inequality can affect girls and women badly, but today we're going to talk about how it affects boys and men too.

Many boys and men feel pressured to appear "strong" at all times because of some of the gender stereotypes we've seen throughout this course. This means that they might bottle up their feelings and not talk to others if they're feeling sad or down.

It's not good to bottle up your feelings - globally, the suicide rate among men is twice as high as women, and many attribute it to men not being able to share that they're feeling down.

This need for masculinity can also limit boys and men being able to express themselves in the ways they want to - they may not be able to do the activities or careers they want to do in the future.

In the last lesson we talked about gendered violence and its effects on women - however, it impacts men and the general population too. It's thought that violence against women sometimes costs countries more than double what they spend on their education. As well as this, men and boys that are engaged in fighting for gender equality are proven to have healthier and happier relationships with women.

MODULE 5: HOW GENDER BIAS CAN AFFECT BOYS

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Which country is number one in the world for gender equality?

Name three positive impacts that gender equality can have on men.

REFLECTION: Discuss with your classmates something you'd like to do differently to help with gender equality, and what impact this would make.

ACTIVITY: Make a poster showing the most important things you've learned about gender equality and