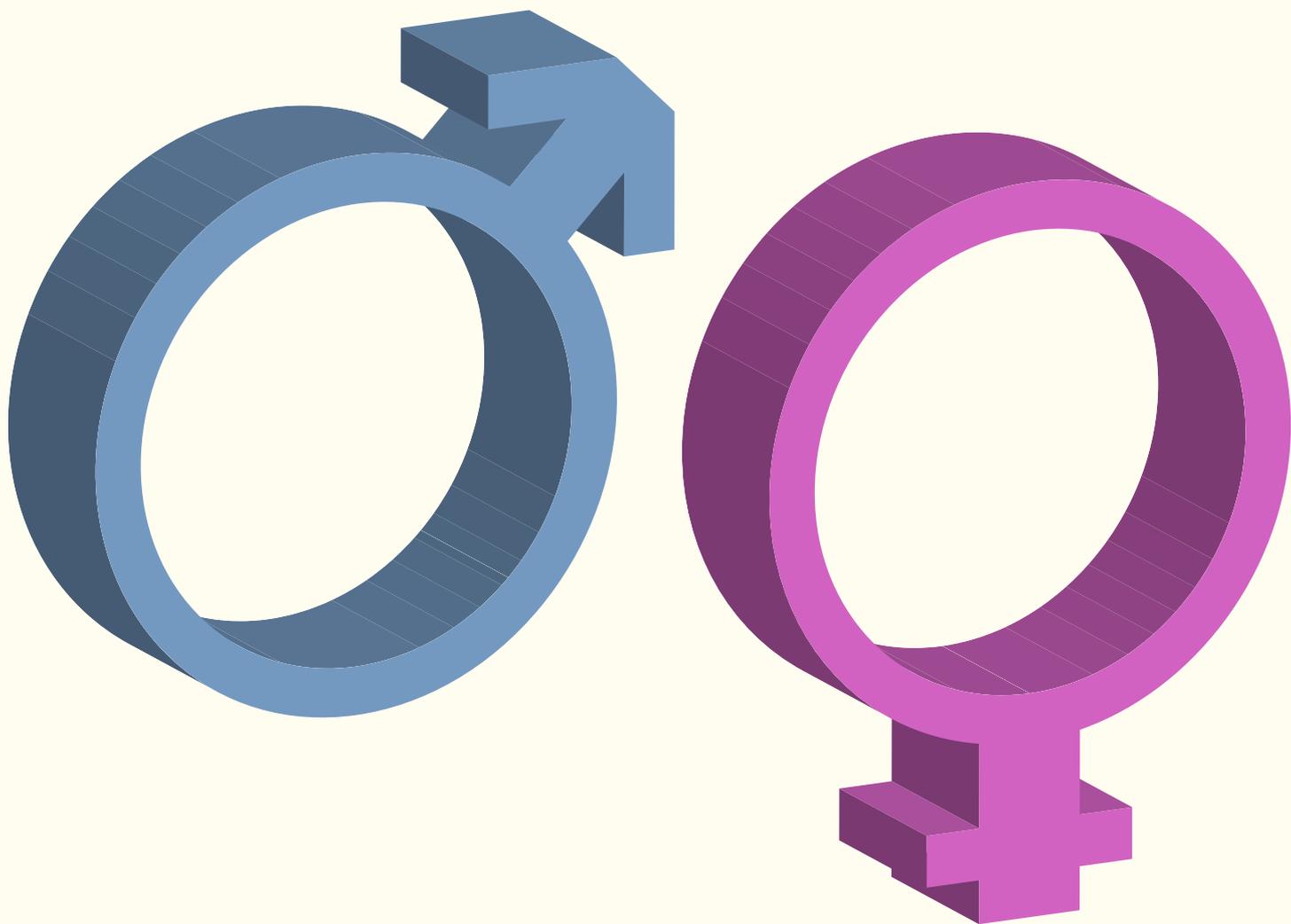


GENDER SENSITIVITY TEACHING GUIDE

AUTHORED BY MAAHIR BHARATRAM



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INTRODUCTION

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.

While the issue of gender disparity is multifaceted and requires interventions at numerous levels, one of the most effective ways to imagine an equal world is by implementing gender sensitisation programmes in schools for children. Most societies are deeply patriarchal and don't have in built systems to educate young boys about gender disparity, gendered violence and the like. Boys grow up believing backward and regressive notions about women which may end up impacting how they treat the women around them. It is important for this type of patriarchal conditioning to be met with a form of training that enforces the values of equality and non discrimination, and teaches boys about gender biases, discrimination, gendered violence and more. Implementing this on school going boys is even more crucial as it is important for them to espouse values of gender equality from a young age onwards so they don't grow up with problematic notions of manhood and can work towards an equal world from an early age.

It has been proven time and again, that the class, caste or religion of a household does not determine how they raise the boys in their family. Recently, the case of an online chat group by the name of ‘Boys Locker Room’, in which affluent male students of a well known school have been found to be making sexist and problematic statements about girls and sharing their private pictures, has shocked people who believed that this kind of behaviour was only limited to boys from lower income groups who didn't come from “well educated families”. What this case proves is that patriarchy cuts across all social classes. Apart from targeted interventions that specifically aim to educate boys about the evils of gender inequality, there is not much that can be done to prevent boys from growing up with at least some kind of gender bias.

INTRODUCTION

It is essential to have discussions around gender inequality at home, change begins at the very basic level, and our homes are the first place we should implement the values we believe in. Another area where interventions around gender equality should take place is schools. After their homes, children spend most of their time in schools and that's where a great deal of their learning takes place. Schools can be great catalysts for raising awareness around feminism and patriarchy at a young age and nipping the problem of gender bias in the bud.

This guide is a way 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.

VOCABULARY

- Equity - the quality of being fair and impartial.
- Gender - either of the two sexes (male and female), especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences rather than biological ones. The term is also used more broadly to denote a range of identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female.
- Gender Bias - Gender bias is the tendency to prefer one gender over another. It is a form of unconscious bias, or implicit bias, which occurs when one individual unconsciously attributes certain attitudes and stereotypes to another person or group of people.
- Gender Gap - The gender pay gap or gender wage gap is the average difference between the remuneration for men and women who are working. Women are generally considered to be paid less than men.
- Patriarchy- Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property. Some patriarchal societies are also patrilineal, meaning that property and title are inherited by the male lineage.
- Stereotypes - In social psychology, a stereotype is an over-generalized belief about a particular category of people. It is an expectation that people might have about every person of a particular group. The type of expectation can vary; it can be, for example, an expectation about the group's personality, preferences, or ability.
- Discrimination - the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.
- Human Rights - Human rights are moral principles or norms that describe certain standards of human behaviour and are regularly protected as natural and legal rights in municipal and international law.
- Feminist - A person who believes in and practices feminism - Feminism is a range of social movements, political movements, and ideologies that aim to define, establish, and achieve the political, economic, personal, and social equality of the sexes.
- Equal Income - The concept that men and women get paid equal wages for equal amount of work.
- Empowerment - the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights.

VOCABULARY

- **Diversity** - Diversity is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs.
- **Activism** - the policy or action of using vigorous campaigning to bring about political or social change.
- **LGBTQ** -LGBTQ is an initialism that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer. These are
- **Sensitivity** - The quality or condition of being sensitive, i.e receptive and understanding of people's identities and opinions..

GUIDING QUESTIONS

What does gender equity mean?

The concept of gender equity refers to “fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities”

“Gender equality, equality between men and women...does not mean that women and men have to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they were born male or female. Gender equity means fairness of treatment for men and women according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but which is considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities.” –United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Why is gender equality important?

Each democracy has to be built on the belief that human rights need to be enforced. Equality is a fundamental human right, and each society strives to provide each citizen with equal opportunities and access to resources. True equality cannot be achieved without ensuring gender equality. While people are unequal in multiple aspects, gender inequality is a problem that plagues each and every society at unacceptable levels. Gender inequality is the root cause for a lot of evils in our society. Most gendered violence like rape, sexual harassment, domestic violence, honour killing and more stem from the root cause of gender inequality. Moreover the state in which almost half of the society is deprived of equal access to resources and opportunities as compared to the other, is not desirable for any society to flourish and prosper.

Who is responsible to ensure that we live in an equitable world?

There are many answers to this question, but what all schools of thought would agree to is that living in an equitable world is a collective burden that we all must carry. We all have different roles to play, and it is essential that we all come together to fight the evil of gender inequality.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

What is the difference between gender equity, gender equality and women's empowerment?

“Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men. To ensure fairness, strategies and measures must often be available to compensate for women's historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field. Equity leads to equality. Gender equality requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially-valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Where gender inequality exists, it is generally women who are excluded or disadvantaged in relation to decision-making and access to economic and social resources. Therefore a critical aspect of promoting gender equality is the empowerment of women, with a focus on identifying and redressing power imbalances and giving women more autonomy to manage their own lives. Gender equality does not mean that men and women become the same; only that access to opportunities and life changes is neither dependent on, nor constrained by, their sex. Achieving gender equality requires women's empowerment to ensure that decision-making at private and public levels, and access to resources are no longer weighted in men's favour, so that both women and men can fully participate as equal partners in productive and reproductive life.” - UNFPA

Why is gender equality a concern for men?

It is widely believed that eradicating gender inequality is a mission that only empowers women. The common notion is that patriarchy is a perfect system for men and that it does not hinder their growth and development in any way possible.

This notion is wrong because patriarchy has negative consequences for men too.

Toxic masculinity leads to men not being able to explore their emotions and expressing themselves genuinely. Society teaches men to never cry or talk about their feelings it expects men to never be vulnerable and always “man up” in the face of adversity. Without an acceptable outlet for their feelings, many men end up turning to unhealthy coping mechanisms such as alcohol or drug abuse.

Even in serious matters such as sexual assault, the minimization and outright dismissal of male sexual assault doesn't exactly encourage men to come forward after an incident, and it can seriously impede recovery. A sexual assault victim is seen as ‘weak’ or ‘not man enough’ and hence men hesitate before outing their perpetrators.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Under patriarchy, women are seen as biological caretakers while men are supposed to single handedly carry the burden of looking after the household's material needs. They are supposed to be the bread earners, and are not supposed to display much affection or vulnerability to their families and loved ones. This deprives men of the opportunity to take on nurturing and caregiving roles, which they might excel at. It restricts men into an exhaustive set of roles that they have to fulfill, which, if broken would lead to them being labelled less than.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

The first topic of discussion could be on how boys can be involved in the fight for gender equality. What kind of roles can they play, who all can they influence to be more gender sensitive. This discussion should also explore concepts of allyship and support. The students should be encouraged to explore all the different ways in which feminist activism takes place. It should also talk about the importance of working together and how collective struggle is needed to create large scale impact.

The second topic could be about ways to promote gender equality in various spheres of life, whether it be in our communities, our homes or our schools. You could ask the students to think about things they can do at home to raise awareness about gender equality, such as having discussions with relatives who espouse patriarchal values, trying to ensure the male and female members of the household are treated equally and more. You could also ask the students to identify problems at home and come up with solutions to solve them and discuss them among each other.

The third topic of discussion could be about male privilege. You could pose a question to the students about whether male privilege exists or not. You could ask them to give examples and back up their opinions with evidence. You could also use certain incidents to highlight the existence of male privilege, for example what are their curfew timings? Is there a difference between the curfew timings of the male and female students? Is every student allowed freedom in what they choose to wear? Do both the sexes feel comfortable in public spaces at all times during the day?

The next thing to talk about could be gendered violence. You could ask the students to list out instances of gendered violence and then proceed to try and trace the roots of gendered violence. You could ask the following questions to try to get the students to think critically about this practice:

- Who commits gendered violence?
- Who is at the receiving end of this violence ?
- Can men be targeted in gendered violence?
- Is gendered violence only perpetrated only by men of a certain socio economic class?
- Why do men feel entitled to women's bodies?
- In what ways are instances of gendered violence normalised?
- How can this be stopped?

DISCUSSION TOPICS

Another topic of discussion could be about discriminatory practices. One could discuss about how gender discrimination is codified into laws and rules and norms. Examples such as different curfew times for hostels, absence of paternity leave and more can be discussed. You could also try to explore the differences between discriminatory practices such as differential curfew times and affirmative action policies such as separate women's coach in the metro. You could ask questions like who benefits from each of these type of policies? What is the main intention behind implementing each of these policies?

ONLINE RESOURCES

- <https://feminisminindia.com/>
- <https://inbreakthrough.org/>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/teacher-blog/2013/aug/18/feminism-gender-inequality-education-news-teaching-resources>
- Gender Equality in Education
- Thomas & Friends on Gender Equality - Goal #5
- Gender stereotypes and education
- Gender equality: the power of change
- Twelve Books for Feminist Boys and Girls
- UN Women - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
- Feminism Facts for Kids