

Violence Against Women: To Increase Awareness about Gender Parity in Middle and Senior School Curriculum

A Dissertation submitted to the Panjab University, Chandigarh for the award of Master of Philosophy in Social Sciences, in Partial Fulfilment of the requirement for the Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration (APPPA)

by

Candidate's Name: Air Cmde Atul Sagar

(Roll No. 4623)

**Under the guidance
of**

Supervisor's Name: Dr Nupur Tiwary



46th ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMME IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

(2020-21)

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

NEW DELHI

CERTIFICATE

I have the pleasure to certify that Atul Saggar has pursued his research work and prepared the present dissertation titled “Violence Against Women : To Increase Awareness about Gender Parity in Middle and Senior School Curriculum” under my guidance and supervision. This dissertation is the result of his own research and to the best of my knowledge, no part of it has earlier comprised any other monograph, dissertation or book. This is being submitted to the Panjab University, Chandigarh, for the purpose of Master of Philosophy in Social Sciences in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration of Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi

I recommend that this dissertation of Atul Saggar is worthy of consideration for the award of M.Phil degree of Panjab University, Chandigarh.



(Dr. Nupur Tiwary)
Indian Institute of Public Administration
I.P. Estate, Ring Road,
New Delhi-110002

Acknowledgement

At the outset, I would like to express sincere gratitude to my guide, Dr Nupur Tiwary, for her continued support, guidance, and enthusiasm in my pursuit of this dissertation. Her immense knowledge of the subject and vast field experience has been instrumental in the completion of this study in this short period of time. Thanks to Dr Nupur's regular advice and suggestions, the focus of the study could be maintained. It would not have been possible to complete this study without her sustained mentoring and supervision.

I would like to thank the IIPA for providing me this opportunity to pursue this topic, which I am extremely passionate about. Without the extensive infrastructural facilities provided by IIPA, it would not have been possible to complete this study. Credit is also due to the Course Coordinator of Digital 46th APPPA, Dr. (Prof.) Charru Malhotra and Co-Coordinator Dr (Prof) Pawan Taneja, for maintaining a very enabling environment through the length of the course, despite the severe constraints imposed due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Gratitude is also due to all other faculty members at IIPA/ subject experts for their valuable inputs/ comments during the research proposal presentations, which helped in focussing the thrust of this research work. I also want to thank the IIPA library staff, specifically Smt Surbhi Sahni and Smt Meena Mishra, for their patient and ever forthcoming assistance in making the relevant reference material available. Appreciation also needs to be made of the assistance provided by the IIPA administrative staff members, Shri Manish, Shri Anil and Shri Rajesh.

The contents of this course have decidedly widened my knowledge base, whilst enhancing my understanding of public policy and governance. The interaction with officers from the civil and defence services has been an enriching and enlightening experience, which I shall always cherish.

Finally, I must thank my wife Ritu, and sons, Aditya and Anand, for their encouragement and patience in my pursuit of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Atul Sagar', written in a cursive style.

Air Cmde Atul Sagar

Place : New Delhi

Date : 26 Mar 21

Abstract

The scourge of gender-based violence and sexual harassment of women in India, is all too well known. The figures are staggeringly shocking and embarrassing for a nation which is poised to become a world leader. Reported figures indicate that as recently as 2019, an Indian woman/ girl got raped every 16 minutes, with nearly 88 getting violated daily. Equally deplorably, in the same year, over 7000 dowry murders took place, with one occurring every 73 minutes.

It is redundant to state that this situation is unacceptable. Researchers unanimously agree that to stem this trend, not only must women be made aware of their rights, be protected under the law, and be empowered, but the feudal mindset of men towards women needs to be changed. They also agree that this change would be best affected when targeted at school students. Changing mindsets of impressionable adolescents would not only be easier than trying to alter the mindset of adults but would also result in their becoming more responsible and sensitized adults as they leave school for college/ jobs. Given the unanimity of this view, it would only appear natural that school curriculum in India would be modelled accordingly to address the issue of gender-based violence.

To appreciate the alignment of the school curriculum towards this cause, an overview of the NCERT social studies syllabi for middle and senior school was undertaken. Whilst the topic of gender parity, equality of work, discrimination, stereotyping, etc are addressed to a reasonable extent, the text shies away from addressing the prevalence of gender-based violence in India in any substantial form. While there is the mention of domestic violence, dowry murders and harassment in public places are mentioned, the references are sporadic, infrequent, and far too

scattered throughout the text to have any meaningful impact. Moreover, the narrative, even in classes 9-12, when the topic could have been discussed in greater detail, is too benign and sanitized. Discussion about violence/ harassment (viz assault, domestic violence, rape, stalking, date rape, acid attacks, molestation, groping, etc) perpetrated against women is effectively non-existent in the textbooks. No data from police/ crime records is indicated. Consequently, the scale of the problem is never revealed to the students, thereby failing to trigger debate and introspection. While this topic is left untouched, complex issues such as religious discrimination, caste and social discrimination, economic inequality and denial of opportunities, etc are comprehensively covered, with sequentially increasing detail in the text as the classes progress.

In the absence of adequate focus given to the topic, an opportunity to make the young adults sensitized/ 'alive' to an existential problem and bring about change in society, goes abegging. This is not to suggest that gender equality and discrimination is not addressed at school level. However, the associated malaise of flagrant gender-based violence, of possibly greater implication to society, remains unaddressed.

If the potential to change mindsets of adolescents (while at school) is to be fully exploited, a two-pronged approach needs to be adopted. For one, the current syllabi need to include topics related to gender-based violence, which places the problem upfront, thereby necessitating a redressal. Identifying a problem, realizing its gravity and discussing its implications/ solutions, has to be the first step towards its resolution. The content could be varied based on the level of uptake/ maturity of students in junior classes and be ramped up with their progression to senior classes by including police/ crime data, case studies, etc. Laws related to protection of women and punitive action that can be applied could also be discussed.

Concurrently, value education needs to be introduced at school. At present, apparently the focus at school is entirely academic, aimed at churning out professionals for jobs, with little effort to develop character and values. Along with core subjects, the minds of young adults needs to be suitably engaged to examine what roles they are expected to play in society as adults and what changes need to be brought about in the community to make it better. To retain the interest of the class and not add to the academic burden of senior class students, it is recommended that these value education classes not be assessed but be made compulsory for attendance. A free flowing discussive method of conducting value education classes may be employed (especially in senior classes), rather than the formal conservative lecture method, as the former would allow ideas/ sentiments to be freely exchanged between the teacher/ students, and among students themselves. Suitably qualified and trained teachers/ instructors would need to be employed for these classes to keep the discussions focussed to achieve the intended outcome and to prevent the discussions from turning lewd/ risqué.

For too long, misconduct against women in India, in all its forms, has not been given the importance it deserves. For a civilization that prides itself on its reverence and honour of the feminine ‘energy’, it is only appropriate that an effort be initiated to reduce (if not totally eradicate) crimes against women, by sensitizing our young men on how to conduct themselves around women.

Key words : sexual harassment, gender-based violence, gender sensitization, value education, school curriculum.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Chapter 1 – Introduction - Harassment faced by Indian women and general apathy
2. Chapter 2 - Literature Review
3. Chapter 3 – Content of current NCERT school syllabi concerning gender violence sensitization.
4. Chapter 4 – Overview of NCERT syllabi of classes 6-10 addressing awareness about gender- based crimes.
5. Chapter 5 – Inclusions /changes proposed in school syllabi to increase awareness about gender-based violence
6. Chapter 6 - Conclusion & Recommendations.
7. References

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1	Extract from chapter 1 of standard 6 Social and Political Life Pt 1, NCERT	34
2	Extract from chapter 1 of standard 6 Social and Political Life Pt 1, NCERT	35
3	Extract from chapter 2 of standard 6 Social and Political Life Pt 1, NCERT	37
4	Extract from chapter 2 of standard 6 Social and Political Life Pt 1, NCERT	38
5	Extract from chapter 2 of standard 6 Social and Political Life Pt 1, NCERT	39
6	Extract from Unit 3 of standard 7, Social and Political Life Part 2, NCERT	41
7	Extract from Unit 3 chapter 4 of standard 7, Social and Political Life Part 2, NCERT	44
8	Extract from Unit 3 Chapter 4 of standard 7, Social and Political Life Part 2, NCERT	45
9	Extract from Unit 3 Chapter 5 of standard 7, Social and Political Life Part 2, NCERT	48
10	Extract from Unit 1 Chapter 10 of standard 7, Social and Political Life Part 2, NCERT	49
11	Extract from Unit 2 Chapter 4 of standard 8, Social and Political Life Part 3, NCERT	49
12	Extract from Unit 2 Chapter 4 of standard 8, Social and Political Life Part 3, NCERT	51
13	Global child sex ratio (source - Wikipedia)	54
14	Extract from Unit 2 Chapter 5 of standard 8, Social and Political Life Part 3, NCERT	54
15	Extract from Unit 2 Chapter 4 of standard 10, Democratic Politics-II, NCERT	58
16	Extracts from Unit 2 Chapter 4 of standard 10, Democratic Politics-II, NCERT	60
17	Extract from Chapter 1 of standard 11, Part 1, Introducing Sociology, NCERT	72
18	Extract from Chapter 2 of standard 11, Part 1, Introducing Sociology, NCERT	72
19	Extract from Chapter 3 of standard 11, Part 1, Introducing Sociology, NCERT	73
20	Extract from Chapter 3 of standard 11, Part 1, Introducing Sociology, NCERT	74
21	Extract from Chapter 8 of standard 12, Social Change and Development in India, NCERT	77

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION – HARASSMENT FACED BY INDIAN WOMEN AND

GENERAL APATHY

“A woman is human. She is not better, wiser, stronger, more intelligent, more creative, or more responsible than a man. Likewise, she is never less. Equality is a given. A woman is human.” - Vera Nazarian

“We've begun to raise daughters more like sons... but few have the courage to raise our sons more like our daughters.” - Gloria Steinem

1. For too long, India has had the dubious reputation of not treating its women at par with men. Despite its long civilizational history and rich cultural heritage, India continues to be shamed by the cases of violence against its women. Sexual harassment of women and their exploitation, is sadly, commonplace. The misdemeanours are irrespective of the social strata, or economic standing of the victim, or the perpetrator. From horrific rapes, dowry murders and honour killings to the apparently ‘harmless’ molestation, eve teasing/ groping and harassment in public/ workplace, the outrage women face in all walks of life are all too pervasive.

2. Another aspect of this deplorable situation is the fact that there has been no substantial improvement in the attitude of men towards women despite the strict laws that were instituted across the board in the aftermath of the brutal Nirbhaya case of Dec 2012. Obviously, deterrence has not worked. Cases of misdemeanours against women did not reduce as was hoped. Scholars have identified that the feudal mind-set

that drives 'khap' panchayat decisions, allows men to misbehave with women with impunity (even in public places) and leads to mistreatment of the latter, stems from age old stereotypical mind sets which place men on a higher pedestal than women. While the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act of 2013 stipulates professional conduct at the workplace, it is essentially an 'enforcing' stipulation, rather than a curative one for the malaise. While this approach may dissuade/discourage misbehaviour by men against women at the workplace, it does not address the basic need for the men to change their 'condescending' or misogynist outlook towards women, which is deeply ingrained and 'inherited'. It does not, in any way, make the men aware of the fears, vulnerabilities, aspirations, apprehensions, health issues, experienced by women and the expectations they have from their male counterparts.

3. If deterrence by punishment has not apparently worked, an alternative solution needs to be identified as the problem cannot be left unresolved to fester. An alternate solution that has been recommended by most scholars uses education as a holistic tool to rectify the problem. What is required is to alter/ change the mindset of the boys/ men to treat women as their equal, so that, ideally, guidelines such as the Vishakha Guidelines and provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2013 become irrelevant/ redundant. While this may sound Utopian, it is an ideal to aspire for. As a nation, as we try to emulate the technological and economic advances made by other nations, we must address this issue as well for the country's social progress.

4. The problem of mindset is known, but not spoken about. It is an accepted fact that the first step to resolve any problem is to openly acknowledge that the problem exists and that it needs to be addressed. In this regard, the quote by Gloria Steinem

(given above) is most apt. A start, by unapologetically acknowledging a problem, like the one related to the deficiency of toilets in India forcing open defecation, made by the current Prime Minister, is the kind of bold and candid approach that needs to be adopted. This acceptance of problem on a national level ensured that the problem was placed upfront to be confronted, discussed and resolved.

5. While the reasons why some men conduct themselves inappropriately towards women are a subject for separate study, there is need to generate gender sensitization among boys at an age when their mindset and outlook can be influenced positively. It must be at that impressionable/ tender age when their minds are still open to suggestions/ change and have not become rigid. Efforts to sensitize at later ages when ideas have matured, or even left to be learnt by themselves, defeats the entire purpose. Hence, there is a need to engage these students at school level between the age of 12/13 years (ie pre-pubescent) and continue the sensitization till they leave school at about 16/17 years of age (ie midway through/ post pubescent stage).

6. To be fair, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), India's most widely followed pan Indian educational Council, realizing the need for gender sensitization, has included the topic in its Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) syllabus. Related subject matter has been included in select chapters in the school curricula for Social Studies from class VI onwards till class X. Preliminary perusal of the content reveals that topics such as gender bias, gender stereotyping, rise of the feminism movement, roles/ responsibilities handled by women at work and in politics, women achievers, growing up as boys and girls, etc find mention in one, or at best, two chapters per grade. A few women achievers are spoken about and basic disparities in treatment of men and women at work and in the home, mentioned.

7. However, in none of the chapters is there any specific or definitive mention made of the issues of gender-based violence or sexual violence against women. Stark facts, figures, numbers, or case studies about the excesses perpetrated against women in India hardly find mention in the text. The narration is too sanitised to present the true picture. In the absence of specifics, reality gets obfuscated. No discussion/ debate question is suggested as a class activity to bring out issues related to sexual violence, their repeated occurrences, reasons, remedial measures, etc. The narratives in the books are extremely generic and brief, tending to gloss over the patriarchal mindset that is at the root of these issues. For example, the entire issue of domestic violence, sexual harassment and domestic violence are mentioned in just one single sentence in the Class X book! If these issues in their harshest reality are not brought to the fore, the opportunity to sensitize our young men to the shortcomings of our societal conduct in terms of how we treat our women folk, would be lost. They must be made aware of the extent of the problem, and that the change needs to start from their own conduct. It is opined that if facts and figures of molestation, dowry deaths, harassment, rape, domestic violence, etc are mentioned, factually without sensationalizing the topic, as also the reality of khaps panchayats and cases of acid attacks by stalkers, young adults would be inspired to discuss them maturely. The idea is to awaken the conscience of these young people so that they question the archetypal behaviour of generations gone by.

8. Paradoxically, at an age when young men and women are maturing emotionally and are on the threshold of becoming majors, the entire focus shifts absolutely on pure academic pursuit with no focus on their growth towards becoming responsible citizens of the country. This aspect of civic growth towards becoming 'good human beings' is ignored entirely. The role of the school environment,

teachers, and friends in shaping the personality and outlook of a young child/ adult, along with the home environment, cannot be overemphasised. Formal exposure to the issue at school could trigger a change at his home environment too. Children are often the triggers for civic/ social change and can be the instrument to force their elders to mend/ change mind sets.

9. The issue is not limited to the inadequate data conveyed at school in terms of the sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated against women. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that no such exposure is undertaken once the student moves to senior school ie classes XI and XII. Students who choose to pursue science or commerce in classes XI and XII, are not involved in this gender sensitization pursuit at all as there are no classes/ discussions on the subject. At an age when young people must get to know the mindset of the opposite sex, it is denied entirely!

10. While a softer/ sanitised exposure to the problem of gender inequality could be considered in younger classes (considering the naivete/ innocence of the age), harsher realities must be introduced in classes XI and XII with facts and figures/ case studies. Importantly, students must be encouraged to interact in discussions on the topic. Girls need to be encouraged to share their apprehensions, experiences and express their expectations of behaviour by society and men in the social, personal, familial, public and work environment. Similarly, boys too just be encouraged to discuss these topics. The topic is sensitive and would need dexterity in handling. The teacher chosen for the task must have the necessary training and gravitas/ sensitivity to moderate the discussion and steer the discussion correctly to ensure relevant outcomes and gains. This engagement at school should serve as an appropriate platform for triggering the mindset change. The RTE Act (for children between the ages of 6-14 years) and the NEP of Jul 2020 offer a unique opportunity to mould our

young adults to become responsible citizen. Behavioural studies find that while in the short run there is a backlash by men as traditional gender bastions are challenged, the negative stereotypes eventually disappear. Sustained affirmative action with this captive audience at school might be the change that is overdue.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

11. In the UN's gender equality index, India features at number 95 out of 129 nations, just above sub-Saharan African nations. While crimes against women are a global reality, cases of rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, molestation, acid attacks, passing of lewd remarks in public places, etc in India are on a different level altogether. Research has shown that perpetration of this violence is primarily attributed to a feudal mindset of Indian men who consider women inferior. Education has been recommended as the primary means by which this mindset can be changed.

12. This change of mindset needs to be undertaken while young minds are still tender and impressionable. Scholars agree that young boys and girls must be targeted while at middle and high school to sensitize them to gender based violence issues. If young adults are not sensitized/ informed about this social evil at school level, their feudal/ medieval mindset is likely to remain unaltered and consolidated. This would result in lost opportunities to bring about the change. However, the present school textbooks offer an extremely sanitised and sugar-coated picture of the problem, not revealing the true picture of crimes/ misdemeanours against women. The success achieved with the experiment conducted in 341 schools with 1400 students of Haryana, is indicative of the change that is possible if the students are encouraged to

discuss this problem. To address this shortfall the following questions would need to be considered;

- a. What is the current content of gender sensitization material in NCERT books for middle and senior school students?
- b. Does the content bring out realities/ scale of mistreatment of Indian women in terms of sexual violence/ mistreatment or is too sanitized?
- c. Does the syllabi suggest questions/ activities which trigger discussion/ debate on the topic or is it too sedate in its approach?
- d. Does any other school level curriculum in any other country address the gender sensitization issue in a forthcoming manner?
- e. Suggest topics for inclusion in middle and senior school classes and, suggest modes of conduct of the class – discussions, debates, lectures, role playing?

PURPOSE / OBJECTIVES

13. This study purports to attempt the following objectives;
 - a. To analyse the policy of NCERT in terms of cultivating gender equality at school and explore the curriculum towards making students gender sensitive.
 - b. To suggest graded increments to the topics which may gradually expose students in middle and senior school to the prevailing realistic environment of sexual harassment that women suffer in their daily lives.
 - c. To suggest inclusion of gender sensitization topics in the curriculum for classes XI and XII as well so that impressionable minds can be moulded

towards mature thinking and outlook about the opposite gender, especially in terms of personal space, physical conduct and behaviour.

d. To suggest class discussions/ activities which must generate healthy discussion and exchange of ideas between both boys and girls without becoming risqué.

RATIONALE/ JUSTIFICATION

14. If the country aspires to be counted amongst the leaders of the modern world, it must progress not only economically and technically, but also socially. If half its potent working force ie the women citizens, are not treated at par and respect with their male counterparts, India's growth would be lopsided and hollow. To assert her right over her physical and mental being, and not constantly fear having a man attack them, is essential for a woman's well-being. Unfortunately, the record of Indian men in misbehaving/ assaulting women is appalling. Unfortunately, again, while a host of social problems like untouchability, public hygiene, cleanliness, public health, education, etc have been addressed by the government over the seven decades since India's independence, little efforts have been made to make women safe in India. Barbaric cases of rape, sexual assault, human trafficking, domestic violence and molestation continue to happen with shocking regularity, without apparently tugging at the moral fibre of the country which would force a change. This situation cannot be business as usual. If the nation is to thrive, women, as the custodians of the family, must be placed at the lead to the process.

15. While what has happened in the past cannot be changed, there is need to reflect on it and take corrective action. A good start point would be make our young men in school sensitive to the apprehensions of women (who are their peers), in terms

of treating the latter with respect and dignity. Education is the key to bring this change, which must start at the earliest. In a graded manner, starting from junior school classes, gender sensitization must become an intrinsic part of the school curriculum. This would ensure that tender minds are informed of what is expected of them and they can question right from wrong. As these young children mature in middle and senior school, the discussion on the realities of gender disparity and ill treatment of women must find increasing mention in the curricula. Scholars have remarked on the absence of formal education in this aspect in the Indian educational system. It is hoped that inclusion of the same will bring about this much overdue change in the mindsets of men as they grow into adulthood.

RESEARCH QUESTION

16. In this context, the study would attempt to study the following questions;
- a) What is the current content of the NCERT curriculum by which gender sensitization is taught in Indian schools?
 - b) What could be the value additions to the existing syllabi that could be added in middle school classes that would make the exposure of young adults to this aspect more meaningful?
 - c) What topics could be included in the syllabus for Classes XI and XII to facilitate a change in the mindset of men towards women, leading to reduction in cases of sexual violence/ harassment against the latter?
 - d) What class activities could generate healthy discussion and exchange of ideas between both boys and girls without becoming risqué?

RESEARCH STRATEGY

17. It is proposed to undertake the study employing a Qualitative Research Strategy.

RESEARCH DESIGNS/ METHODS

18. It is planned to use an Exploratory and Descriptive Research Method. In the effort to find answers to the research questions hypothesized, it is proposed to study the following;

- a) Primary Sources – It is planned to undertake an analysis of all references related to gender sensitization in the NCERT books. This would include all topics and activities related to the topic. It is also proposed to study the relevant policy on educating about gender sensitization at the Ministry of Education, NEP 2020 and as defined by the UN. Reports available with National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) on data of violence against women are also planned to be analysed.
- b) Secondary Sources – Relevant articles and research papers by scholars/ academics in national and international journals are planned to be referred. Books on the subject are also planned to be studied.
- c) Articles in newspapers and magazines containing relevant material on the subject would also be referred to. Studies/ reports by expert committees (sponsored by the state)/ articles would be referred to. Articles written by academicians and independent advisory groups (if available) would also be referred to.

19. To identify the reasons for this abhorrent and aberrant behaviour by Indian men, a literature review is considered inescapable. It would be revealing to know the root cause/s plaguing the issue and remedial measures that could be adopted for corrections.

20. Before undertaking the literature review, it would be prudent to revisit the general meaning of the two terms, gender and gender sensitization, so that their context in the literature review and subsequent arguments are better assimilated.

a. Gender is the ‘process’ which brings about changes in the thought process of people who treat men and women as different entities, and as a result, having different functions to perform in the socio - economic arena of society. Essentially then, gender refers to the socio-cultural differences created by society between males and females in terms of their strength, ability, performance, wage earning capacity and social acceptability etc. While biological processes do not discriminate between men and women, society, by stereotyping them, define women as weak, needing protection, and hence, subordinate to men.

b. Gender sensitization refers to the modification of behavior of those who believe in gender stereotypes, by raising awareness of gender equality. This can be achieved by conducting sensitization campaigns, education, workshop, programs etc. Gender sensitizing is about “changing behavior and instilling empathy into the views that we hold about our own and the other sex.” It helps people in examining their personal attitudes and beliefs and questioning the ‘realities’ they thought they knew.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

General Apathy towards Discussing Sexual Violence

1. The fact that girls and women in India are subjected to harassment, assault and violence on account of their being of the feminine sex, is a fact that is all too well known, though not necessarily accepted and discussed in the open domain as it ought to be. There appears to be general embarrassment/ awkwardness amongst the Indian populace to engage in discussion over this topic as compared to any other. Tragically, this issue is debated in the public realm only in the aftermath of heinous crimes which are widely reported in the media. These incidents seem to temporarily shake the public out of its reverie to acknowledge the presence of the monster of gender violence that exists amongst us, but unfortunately, does not lead to much. There is general apathy to discuss the problem objectively as a persistent discourse, which may result in identifying root causative issues and realistic solutions. On most occasions, emotive (even jingoistic) debates on television are undertaken, during which the issue is often lost in the politics and the hype.

2. Appalling figures of crime against women Public participation is minimal, appearing more as an emotive, knee jerk response by the 'collective conscience' of the people at large as though to rid themselves of 'guilt', rather than a deliberate, rational attempt to seek out the root cause of the problem. It appears to be taboo, especially for adults to address this issue with their young boys/ men to sensitize them and alter their deviant behaviour towards women. As a result, the status of crimes

against women remains largely unchanged, possibly even worsening, despite stricter laws. This is brought out by the data held by the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) which reveals that whilst in 2012, Nirbhaya's case (December 2012) was one of 24923 rape cases reported in India (ie at a shocking rate of nearly 68 rapes per day), in 2018 the daily average actually swelled to 91.38 ! Even in 2019, the reported cases of rape reveal that on the average, 88 women are raped every day in India ie one every 16 minutes. It is just not rape figures that are a shame for the nation. Tragically, as recently as 2019, despite various laws enacted and enhanced social awareness, a dowry murder occurred every 73 minutes in India, with over 7000 cases reported during the year. This disturbing reality does not find mention in our regular news/ media debates but comes to the fore only when a high profile case like the Shakti Mills gang rape case (August 2013), Badaun gang-rape case (May 2014) or the Unnao rape (June 2017) occurs and catches the eye of the media.

3. A progressively worsening malaise Skeptics may contend that violence against women is a relatively recent phenomenon violence and has increased over the past few decades, due exposure to internet and 'modernity' adopted by women themselves, thereby suggesting a return to conservative and regressive ways of living by women. Admittedly, the contention may be true in part, in the sense that exposure to sexually explicit material/ porn on the internet may drive men to consider women as easy prey to satisfy their depravity. To contest this argument, one needs only look at the trends/ figures of crime against women in years gone by when there was no internet.

4. Perusal of a study titled 'Crime Against Women' published in 1982 by the Bureau of Police Research and Development under the aegis of the Ministry of Home Affairs (Misra and Arora, 1982), is revelatory of how far back the rot runs. It is

surprising that it took nearly 35 years after independence for the first such survey to be conducted. It admits that crime against women has remained concealed from police records. The document admits that there is 'reluctance of the victim to come to the police station to report', probably out of guilt/ shame which was (and still is) often associated with crimes against women. A few facts enumerated in the study are annotated below.

- a. Over the period 1971 till 1976, annual cases of rape increased from 2487 to 3893. They rose further to 4058 in 1977.
 - b. Taking 1971 as the base year, the volume of rape cases per lakh of population increased from 0.4 in 1971 to 0.7 in 1978.
 - c. The percentage of victims of rape was the highest in the age group of 16-30 years.
 - d. Over a three year average from 1977-79, of all the offences against women, the highest were under the head 'molestation', wherein a total of 11,642 such cases were reported.
 - e. Crimes like kidnapping, abduction, molestation, rape, murder and abetment to suicide were common in agrarian and urban areas.
 - f. In a study of the sample area, in maximum cases (86.8 percent), the motive of crime was sex. The overall rate of conviction declined from 18.9 percent in 1977 to 13.6 percent in 1978 and further to 5.5 percent in 1979.
 - g. Of the 558 rapes reported in the sample area, only 10.6 percent resulted in convictions.
 - h. Investigation of offences against women take an unduly longer time.
5. The existence of the problem, and the biases, are all too clear. Over the years, cases have not reduced, but have only increased. 2017 saw 33658 cases of rape. More

alarming, most cases of crimes against women are sexual in nature. This aspect needs to be addressed with the male population, if the numbers are to abate.

6. As a result of this general ‘disinterest’ among the populace to establish the root cause of the problem or seek curative measures by engaging in public discourse, it has been left mostly to academics to pursue the subject. The subject has been researched by numerous scholars, a few of them based in India. Indian scholars have identified the lack of adequate education about gender sensitization in India which is arguably one of the major causes of regressive attitudes of men towards women. While it may be thought that only men need to re-align their mindset, most authors have insisted that the sensitization needs to be undertaken for both - corrective for men and assertive for women. In effect, talk of violence against women needs to be ‘brought out of the closet’ and be spoken about frankly.

Findings by Scholars/ Researchers

7. In her 2017 research paper titled ‘Gender Sensitization - A Pillar to Sustainable Development’, Dr Maitreyee Roy described gender sensitization as the process of changing the stereotype mind set of men and women, a mindset which strongly believed that men and women were unequal entities and hence had to function in different socio-economic spaces. Her study also revealed that in both rural and urban areas, a medieval mindset and gender bias prevailed in our society. Implementing curriculums on gender sensitization which would enable students to learn that gender roles are interchangeable, and that they are free to choose what they want to become or do depending on their likes rather than biological make up, needed to be incorporated. That women empowerment was essential to sustainable development, was also evident in several international norms and agreements, including Principle 20 of the Rio Declaration on Development and Environment

adopted in 1992. However, she lamented that the problem with India was that there has been a complete lack of formal education on moral values and ethics. The Indian educational curriculum was restricted essentially to academic subjects only. Thus, the responsibility of teaching children moral values lay with parents or family elders at home, and teachers in educational institutions (Roy, 2017).

8. In her recommendations, the researcher went on to recommend that schools colleges and universities needed to strive to create an educational environment in which both men and women could work together as equals to take their place in society as productive citizens. The whole process must involve educating students about social issues such as sexual assault and domestic violence. Education was a major force to trigger change, but it would only occur when teachers and learners were assisted in adopting classroom initiatives that reflected new images/ ideas based on a positive gender equity ideology. Education needed to be gender friendly and gender sensitive.

9. In March 2013, the National Commission of Women constituted an Expert Committee on Gender and Education, with Ms Charu Walikhanna as its Chairperson, to submit a report and recommendations on the matter. In this report, the author while remarking on the need for changing the stereotyped mindsets of men against women, asserted that the long term solution lay in imparting gender sensitive values through education, since education was of prime significance in the communication of that which is central to the transformation of the human mind (Walikhanna, 2013). She insisted that the existing model in this regard had failed and there is total lack of relevance between the human being and the complex contemporary society. It had been recommended to introduce gender sensitization elements into every subject from the primary level. The male student needed to develop the capability to look at a

woman without negative(?) sexual thoughts. Along with teaching children the complexities of their academic subjects, they needed to be taught the fundamental tenets of male and female interaction. Character building of adolescent boys and changing their mindset, needed to be implemented without delay. Importantly, this process must start at a very tender age, not when the child is older and formed his views. Children in the age group of 6-16 years needed to be imparted human rights education to ensure they grew up into responsible and sensitive adults. The positive impact of education on the ability of women to resist and resolve domestic violence issues, had been shown in a study in Kolkatta (Sen,1999). The need of the hour was a thorough review of textbooks, pedagogy skills, an assessment system and the school milieu, and address the issues where improvement was needed. Among other things, it was recommended that aspects on awareness of relationships and hygiene standards needed to be included in the syllabus to inculcate mature outlook towards the body and bodily functions.

10. In his 2016 paper titled ‘Significance of Education’, Dr Gobind Singh Gure listed out the multitude of challenges faced by Indian women - domestic violence, male domination in society, intimidation, stalking, verbal and domestic abuse, eve teasing, battering, rape, molestation, trafficking, etc in their daily lives. To develop gender parity in society, educational institutions had a major role to play. Though waxing eloquent about teaching gender sensitization in school, the author restricted himself to suggesting conducting of dramas, elocution, slogan writing competitions, etc as tools to promote the same. No substantive change in curriculum was proposed which would kickstart the mindset change (Gure, 2016).

11. In 2020, three researchers, Diva Dhar, Tarun Jain and Seema Jayachandran, undertook an intervention programme in four districts of Haryana, covering 14000

students enrolled in 341 schools. The programme was developed in conjunction with the state government to enhance gender sensitization. An NGO developed a dynamic interactive programme, which was conducted by special trainers for students of classes 6-10. Sessions were held over nearly two years, with inputs taken immediately after the course, and then again after two subsequent years. During the programme, students were informed of role stereotyping and crimes against women. Children were encouraged to discuss topics in a free flowing, dynamic manner, much more than done in regular school classes. In their paper titled 'Reshaping Adolescents' Gender Attitudes: Evidence from a School Based Experiment in India' (Dhar, Jain and Jayachandran, 2020), it was stated that a substantial number of male students displayed enhanced gender sensitization not only immediately after the course but retained the same outlook even two years after the programme. This changed mindset of boys, with effects retained even two years after completion of the program, demonstrated that a targeted approach with young adults had the potential to bring about the necessary change desired.

12. In her November 2016 paper titled, Gender Sensitization in Education: A pathway to women empowerment, Mrs R Gayatri Iyengar, stated that if India was to be counted amongst developed nations, it had to create a more literate, knowledgeable, and economically progressive society. Women power was crucial for the economic growth of the country, so that they could participate as equals in the growth, for which their empowerment was essential. This wholesome participation necessitated a reformation in society with special emphasis on gender differences, which could only be achieved through gender sensitization. As per the author, gender and its accompanying power relations are built in all institutions of society, be it the family, educational institutions, workplaces, religious systems, beliefs, norms etc. In

her paper, she explained the strategies to be adopted in schools to promote this sensitization (Iyengar, 2016).

13. The author likened the school environment to a microcosm of society which could be the instrument for bringing about gender sensitization. Schools should serve as the first platform to develop/ reinforce the belief that women are not subordinate to men, and that they have an equally important role to play in decision making at household, community and organization level, as men. She proposed the following strategies to promote gender sensitization in school.

- a. Making the teaching-learning process more participatory. The participatory approach should create an environment where emotions and experience have a definite and valued place.
- b. Providing a space in the classroom for individual children to express themselves freely in the classroom, without fear of judgement and stereotyping, are essential building blocks for their future endeavors where they can confidently in take correct decisions in their life.
- c. Building approaches which encourage learners to compare, comment and think about elements that existed in their own environment. It was necessary to critically question the received knowledge.
- d. Encouraging educational activities in school which inculcated moral values among children and equal respect for boys and girls.
- e. Initiate safety measures for girls in the school environment, the responsibility for which would fall upon the sensitive/ 'sensitized' teacher. An environment of trust would need to be created where experiences could be shared without fear embarrassment or rapprochement and where conflict can be constructively resolved.

14. The school curriculum was recommended to be re-examined and revised with the view of promoting gender sensitization. Gender positive materials and module needed to be made an integral part of teachers' annual in-service training programme. It has also proposed that from upper primary classes onwards, Physical Education must be included for training in self defence for girls.

Gender Parity - Adequacy of Current School Syllabus?

15. Review of literature reveals that all scholars speak unanimously of the widespread prevalence of gender bias and sexual violence/ harassment perpetrated against women in Indian society. They are also near unanimous in their agreement that education about this issue is the best way to address the problem, and that school is the most appropriate, and best placed institution, where such mindset changes can be affected. Most reiterate the need to create a gender-neutral environment at school and teach gender sensitization.

16. However, none of the scholars have specifically remarked about the sufficiency of the current school syllabus being taught at schools. No assessment has been made about the adequacy or the inadequacy of the current content which could affect the perpetuation of gender sensitization or gender parity among school students. No critical analysis of the topics in the Social Science stream has been made, which would indicate whether the issue of gender parity is being addressed effectively. Available reference material does not mention any activist/ scholar who has suggested any specific alterations/ additions/ deletions to the current syllabus to make it any more wholesome and complete in this aspect.

Present status of addressing gender-based violence issues at school

17. More specifically, none of the scholars have made a mention of the inclusion/ exclusion of topics on gender-based violence in the present educational syllabus. This

topic falls under the purview of Social Science or civics at school. Under the current academic environment prevalent in schools in the country, primarily focused on rote and the need to score the highest possible marks, teachers at most schools are compelled to limit themselves to the syllabus content, constrained to 'complete' it in a fixed time frame, not having the time / liberty to go beyond the printed word, as they prepare students for the numerous and rigorous examinations that form an intrinsic part of the academic session.

18. Though 'Value/ Moral Education' as a subject was taught in some schools (primarily ISC Board based or privately run) in junior classes in decades gone by, few schools today find it 'worth' the effort, time, or necessity to invest in the moral development or awareness of young students. While Panchatantra tales or Aesop's Fables were commonly covered with young students in these classes, topics relevant to juveniles were covered in such schools to develop life skills of the latter. However, these classes seem to have died a natural death over time, as the focus of schools increasingly shifted towards exhaustive academic pursuits and general materialism, especially with the turn of the century. At present, little, if no moral/ value education involving adolescents is undertaken in schools, hard pressed as they are with the pressure of board and competitive exams. Given the lack of intent/ inability of schools to involve adolescents in discussing prevalent community issues which should be brought to the fore before they set off in their journey as adults, deficiencies in appreciating and alleviating social ills that plague society are only bound to show up. An opportunity to bring about societal change goes abegging. While the syllabus may be effective in producing successful professionals of our school children, it may not be as effective in creating sensitive, responsible and socially aware human beings, the bulwarks of responsible citizenry in any country.

CHAPTER 3

CONTENT OF CURRENT NCERT SCHOOL SYLLABI CONCERNING

GENDER VIOLENCE SENSITIZATION

1. In the absence of any formalized/ instituted method at school to develop awareness of young adolescents about issues specifically related to sexual harassment/ violence against women, and the fact that research on the topic has not revealed any methodology of how this was to be achieved with school students, a rational start point would be to undertake a detailed analysis of the of NCERT social science/ civics school syllabus content. This exercise is proposed to be undertaken with the underlying premise that inclusions/ inadequacies on the subject would be revealed. Specific corrective proposals/ recommendations can only be proffered based on what is currently present/ available in the curriculum. Specific chapters in the social science books dealing with gender-based issues shall be the focus of this analysis, while also looking for related inputs contained in other chapters.

Basis and objectives for inclusion of current topics in NCERT syllabi

2. Prior to embarking on the effort to study and analyze the NCERT syllabi of classes 6 to 10 Social Science for adequacy of content related to sensitization of students towards gender-based violence, it is considered prudent to try and understand the stated objectives of the books' authors. This is important because it would provide the contextual background of what educational needs of the children are attempted to be fulfilled in each class, leading to identification of topics for inclusion in the textbooks.

3. Social Science Class 6-12 Review of the NCERT website reveals a purported 'statement of intent' written to explain the objectives of the social science syllabi for classes 6-12, as an extension of the Environmental Studies (EVS) taught till class 5. The gist of the syllabi from classes 6-12 is essentially to give the students an overview of society and the world they live in, so that they may understand their role in it and be better prepared for it upon growing up. It is to 'give the child a firm sense of locality, region and nation in an interconnected and complex manner'. It also aims to help students 'understand society and the world in which they live.....and also in relation to each other'. In pursuing the stated objectives, the topics have been based on theme and involvement, rather than information to avoid overburdening the student with details. As the student progresses into class 9 and 10, the intent shifts to understanding the socio-political overlaps between India and the world, so that students are prepared for higher education and a broad range of professions.

4. Lesson Plan/ Interactive Learning Method Initial analyses of the NCERT social science/ civics syllabus for classes 6 to 10 reveals that the chapters/ lessons are well developed in terms of questions that are suggested to be posed by teachers to the students in class. The text is elaborately interspersed with questions/ activities that should be asked to the students to develop the topic further, generate discussion and raise further inquiries. These questions are linked directly to the text and form an extension of the topic under discussion. The questions extend the topic under discussion to similar examples. It is an excellent approach which lends itself to dynamic interaction between the students – teacher, and students themselves. This method empowers the teacher to steer the discussion and moderate it as required, though it needs to be kept in mind that the discussions raised through such

questioning have only as much value as the teacher permits or encourages. The training, personal/ gender bias and sensitivity of the teacher towards the topic under discussion itself, would influence the outcome of these discussions, and the efficacy of this line of teaching.

Contents analysis of class 6 syllabus

5. The class 6 syllabus of Social Science - Social and Political Life Part 1 (NCERT) consists of 4 units comprising 9 chapters. Of these 4 units, the first covers Diversity which is the unit dealing with the topic at hand. The other 3 units cover Governments, Local Governments and Administration and Livelihoods.

6. Chapter 1 – Understanding Diversity This chapter is essentially the first time ever that a student in the NCERT scheme of education is formally introduced to a concept of social life in India. The chapter introduces concepts of people belonging to different back grounds, be they economic, cultural, regional, religious, urban/ rural, etc. Differences in attire, appearances, clothing, celebration of festivals, eating habits, etc are well introduced through the medium of a chance interaction between two boys from different backgrounds. The concept of inequality in terms of some groups of people being lesser privileged in terms of economic standing and availability of opportunities, as compared to others, is also introduced in brief. However, this inequality is not explained in the context of gender-based issues but is restricted to the two aspects enumerated. The topic is well developed through discussions on the various kinds of differences that could exist and yet, how, despite the differences, the country remains united. The value of diversity in Indian life, and the way it enriches the lives of citizens, is brought in. Inclusivity in the culturally, demographic sense is also introduced. The aspect of secularism and pluralism co-existing in India is introduced. Questions are posed to students in the text to elicit

their understanding of these concepts in daily experiences. Examples of the type of questions and activities that are posed to the sixth-grade students to generate inquiry are as annotated;

List at least three different ways in which people in India do the following. One of the possible answers has been provided for you already.

Different ways in which people pray	Through singing a hymn		
Different ways in which people get married		Through signing a register in the court	
Different ways in which people dress			In Manipur women wear a <i>fanek</i>
Different ways in which people greet each other		In Jharkhand many adivasis say "johar" to greet each other	
Different ways in which people cook rice	By making <i>Biryani</i> with meat or vegetables		

Make a list of the festivals that might have been celebrated by the two boys.

Samir *Ek*:

Samir *Do*:

Can you think of a situation in which you made friends with someone who was very different from you? Write a story that describes this.

Fig 1 - Extracts from chapter 1 of standard 6 Social and Political Life Pt 1, NCERT

7. Remarkably, the concept of the caste system and its impact on Indian society in terms of biases and denial, is briefly introduced. Religious differences between the two major religious communities of India ie Hindus and Muslims, is also introduced, understandably in a very benign manner considering the sensitive nature of the topic. Considering the naivete of the target group of class 6 students, brief and appropriate mention of the other religious groups in India and how they got woven into the

national social fabric, especially during the freedom struggle, is also made. In essence, the variety of differences and inequalities prevalent, though not gender based, are introduced quite seamlessly in this introductory chapter. At the end of the chapter, though pertinent questions are posed to the students, they relate only to aspects of diversity and equality on a cultural/ community level. An extract of the type of questions posed to students, is as annotated.

QUESTIONS

1. Draw up a list of the different festivals celebrated in your locality. Which of these celebrations are shared by members of different regional and religious communities?
2. What do you think living in India with its rich heritage of diversity adds to your life?
3. Do you think the term "unity in diversity" is an appropriate term to describe India? What do you think Nehru is trying to say about Indian unity in the sentence quoted above from his book *The Discovery of India*?
4. Underline the line in the poem sung after the Jallianwalla massacre, which according to you, reflects India's essential unity.
5. Choose another region in India and do a similar study of the historical and geographical factors that influence the diversity found there. Are these historical and geographical factors connected to each other? How?

Fig 2 - Extract from chapter 1 of standard 6 Social and Political Life Pt 1, NCERT

8. Chapter 2 – Diversity and Discrimination In continuation with the first chapter on diversity, the second addresses the issue of discrimination associated with it. In this section, 'exclusion' by way of teasing/ ridiculing/ laughing at those who are different from a group, is introduced. The topic of inequality in society is dwelt on further. Building on it further, differences leading to prejudices is introduced. The differences, explained in terms of the way people dress, eat, live, celebrate, etc, based

on their cultural and geographical backgrounds, are attempted to be explained. Diversity in terms of how the eight major religions of the world are practiced, over 1600 languages spoken and 100 dance forms played out in India, find a mention.

9. Again, very commendably (as like the topic of caste in the previous chapter), the idea of ‘social’ insecurity due to diversity is woven into the narrative, as opposite to the idea of celebrating the same. This is well explained in terms of people being in ‘comfort’ when amongst those who are like ‘us’ in terms of dress, food habits, thoughts, etc. Conformity in appearances, generating ‘security’, finds mention in this context, as opposed to those who look differently. Developing the topic further, prejudice, arising from this insecurity and ignorance, is introduced. How prejudice based on different religious beliefs, colour of skin, accents, language, appearances, etc leads to antipathy/ disrespect for ‘others’/ bias, is discussed. Prejudice, precluding reaching out to ‘others’ and forging friendships, is discussed. Students are encouraged to introspect on their personal biases by answering a simple questionnaire about how people live in urban areas, as compared to those in rural areas.

10. The concept of gender-based discrimination leading to ‘stereotyping’ is introduced for the first time in this chapter. The concept is aptly introduced using a short questionnaire, requiring students to ascribe common everyday observable activities, with either boys or girls. These activities include behavioral and physical traits. The questionnaire is as displayed.

Creating Stereotypes

All of us are familiar with gender differences. What does it mean to be a boy or a girl? Many of you would say, "We are born as boys and girls. It is a given. What is there to think about?" Let's see if this is the case.

Arrange the statements given below in these two sections, according to what you think is appropriate for the section.

They are well behaved.
 They are soft spoken and gentle.
 They are physically strong.
 They are naughty.
 They are good at dance and painting.
 They don't cry.
 They are rowdy.
 They are good at sport.
 They are good at cooking.
 They are emotional.

Girls

1
2
3
4
5

Boys

1
2
3
4
5

Now check, with your teacher's help, who has put which statement where. Find out and discuss people's reasons for doing this. Are the qualities you put in for boys something that boys are born with?

If we take the statement "They don't cry", you'll see that this is a quality that is generally associated with boys and men. As babies or children when boys fall and hurt themselves, their parents and other family members often console them by saying "Don't cry. You are a boy. Boys

are brave, they don't cry." As children grow up they start believing that boys do not cry so that even if a boy feels like crying he stops himself from doing so. He also believes that crying is a sign of weakness. So, even though both boys and girls sometimes want to cry, especially if they are angry or in



Fig 3 - Extract from chapter 2 of standard 6 Social and Political Life Pt 1, NCERT

11. The questionnaire is well intended to create awareness among young children about stereotypes, with the useful example of how boys/ men are not expected to cry when in pain or grief as it is a sign of weakness, thereby implying that crying is a trait of weakness associated with the female gender. However, while introducing stereotyping with this questionnaire, the bias towards the male gender is apparently reflected. While crying by men is addressed, no mention is made in the accompanying text of how women/ girls could be physically strong or equal to men. It could be argued that much is being read into the example. However, the fact that the need of the hour is to increase women empowerment (rather than masculine awareness!) and sensitize young boys about gender parity, undercuts the intent for the text to be fully

useful. The entire topic on stereotyping retains a predominantly masculine flavour, disregarding the prowess/ capabilities of women, wherein it could very easily and effectively have addressed both issues. Examples of female athletes of repute (boxer Mary Kom, runner PT Usha, weightlifter Karnam Malleswari, etc are apt examples) could have been given, or day to day examples about stereotyping women could have been used alongside that given about boys. This could have amplified the topic on an even keel for both genders and better explained how girls/ women cannot, and should not, be stereotyped by societal norms/ impressions. To be fair, a small part of the text does question how stereotypes are created by society. A snippet is also placed alongside the main text which considers how certain traits are applied to women and poses related questions. However, how these questions, not part of the main text, are handled by the teacher in discussions, is another issue. The relevant extract is placed below.

This is the way boys are and this is how girls are: these are statements we hear constantly and accept without even thinking, and we start believing that each one of us must behave accordingly. We fit all boys and all girls into an image that society creates around us.

You can take other statements such as **They are soft and gentle** or **They are well behaved** and discuss how these are applied to girls. Do girls possess these qualities at birth or do they learn such behaviour from others? What do you think about girls who are not soft and gentle and those who are naughty?

Fig 4 - Extract from chapter 2 of standard 6 Social and Political Life Pt 1, NCERT

12. The text then shifts onto the topic of children with special needs and associated stereotyping. The pitfalls of stereotyping are discussed in an easy and simple manner, explaining how it does not allow individuals to be appreciated as unique identities with his/ her own special qualities/ skills, but clubbed together to

‘fit’ into a pattern or type. The narrative thereafter moves onto discrimination as people act on their prejudices and stereotypes get formed. This is linked to social, class/ caste based and religious prejudices. The aspect of Muslim girls not attending school due poverty, as opposed to the commonly held belief of a regressive religious mindset, is also covered in detail. Also covered in reasonable detail (for class VI students), are the effects of the centuries’ old caste system on employment avenues and social equality for the lesser privileged in society. Dr BR Ambedkar’s views on untouchability are introduced and covered in sufficient detail. The values of equality enshrined in the Constitution are also included in the text. Towards the end, a passing mention is made of women demanding their right to education at independence. However, in the entire chapter, no mention is made of gender-based discrimination/ harassment which women must face on a day-to-day basis, both in cities and villages across the country. The four questions following the chapter are quite relevant with one (reproduced below), addressing the stereotyping of girls.

2. How can the stereotype that girls are a burden on their parents affect the life of a daughter? Imagine this situation and list at least five different effects that this stereotype can have on the way daughters get treated in the house.

Fig 5 - Extract from chapter 2 of standard 6 Social and Political Life Pt 1, NCERT

Content Analysis of class 7 syllabus

13. The class 7 syllabus of NCERT, Social and Political Life – Part II consists of 5 units, comprising 10 chapters. Of these, Unit 3 deals exclusively with Gender (over two chapters), with other units covering topics as diverse as Equality in Democracy, State Governments, Media and Advertising and Markets.

14. Whilst chapter 1 of the first unit introduces universal adult franchise to students, it intricately also introduces social inequality in other spheres of life.

Inaccessibility to quality medical care, living conditions, employment opportunities, work environment, education, etc are mentioned as some spheres wherein individuals from the economic weaker sections and lower caste groups are denied equal rights. The example of a Muslim couple being denied rented accommodation based on their religion, is also very candidly described. Dignity for all individuals is stressed upon, which is then linked to similar tenets enshrined in the Indian Constitution. No mention of gender-based issues is made in this, or other chapters, of Units 1 and 2.

15. Unit 3, titled Gender, addresses related gender issues specifically for the first time. In Chapter 4, it covers the creation of the stereotype that is associated with a woman's role in the world as shaped by society. In a follow up, Chapter 5 covers the struggle women need to make to forge their identities and pursue their aspirations through case studies.

16. Comprehensive Teacher's Notes The Teacher's Notes that form the 'preamble' to this unit is revelatory in the way the matter has been addressed. The basis of creation of gender stereotyping is explained in a brief, but succinct manner, which should prove to be a good guide for a teacher sensitized to the issue. It also introduces the concepts of gender inequality, and more importantly, 'power relations' between men and women in society. It is commendable that the mention of power relations/ equations between men and women due to gender inequality in a class 6 NCERT textbook, is a candid acceptance of the reality. It is a far cry from earlier times when social science and civics textbooks were limited to covering topics related to studying forms of government, the Constitution, Panchayati system, etc. An extract of the Teacher's Notes is reproduced for reference.

Gender

Teacher's note

Gender is a term that you may often have heard. It is a term, however, that is not easily understood. It tends to remain distant from our lives and restricted to discussions during training programmes. In fact, it is something that all of us experience in our lives on a daily basis. It determines, for example, who we are and what we will become, where we can go and where not, the life choices available to us and those we eventually make. Our understanding of gender is often based on the family and society that we live in. This leads us to think that the roles we see men and women around us play are fixed and natural. In fact, these roles differ across communities around the world. By gender, then, we mean the many social values and stereotypes our cultures attach to the biological distinction 'male' and 'female'. It is a term that helps us to understand many of the inequalities and power relations between men and women in society.

The following two chapters explore the concept of gender without actually using the term. Instead, through different pedagogic tools like case studies, stories, classroom activities, data analysis and photographs, students are encouraged to question and think about their own lives and the society around them. Gender is often mistakenly thought to be something that concerns women or girls alone. Thus, care has been taken in these chapters to draw boys into the discussion as well.

Chapter 4 uses two case studies, situated in different places and points in time to show how girls and boys are brought up or socialised differently. This enables them to understand that the process of socialisation is not uniform; instead it is socially determined and changes continuously over time. The chapter also addresses the fact that societies assign different values to the roles men and women play and the work they do, which becomes a basis for inequality and discrimination. Through a storyboard, students discuss the issue of housework. Done primarily by women, housework is often not considered 'work' and, therefore made invisible and devalued.

Chapter 5 further develops ideas around gender inequalities in the world of work and describes women's struggles for equality. Through a classroom activity, students begin questioning existing stereotypes regarding work and career choices. The chapter also points out that opportunities like education are not equally available to boys and girls. By reading about the lives of two Indian women, from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, students see how women struggled to change their lives by learning to read and write. Change on a large scale usually takes place through collective struggles. The chapter concludes with a photo-essay that gives examples of different strategies the women's movement has used to fight for change.

Fig 6 - Extract from Unit 3 of standard 7, Social and Political Life Part 2, NCERT

17. Significantly, the notes emphasize (highlighted in blue) that the issue is wrongly perceived to be of concern only to women/ girls. The importance to draw boys/ men into the discussion has been factored into the chapter's layout. Again, to a sensitized teacher, it is an indicator to follow the lead to develop the lesson further. However, considering that men/ boys more often than not are the main offenders of the regression/ oppression against women, the statement to 'draw' them into

discussion, is ironic. Merely making the girls/ women aware of their rights/ opportunities does not offer a solution. Had that had been the case or as simple, adequate governmental run awareness and educational programmes over seven decades since independence, would have got the job done. The fact that gender inequality persists and crimes against women have not abated (and actually increased), is indicative that the problem lies elsewhere, and a different approach is necessary. Mandatorily men/ boys must be made participative in this change by affecting a change of mindset. However, this small attempt at fostering a sense of gender parity and awareness among pre- adolescent boys is commendable and must be persisted with.

18. Chapter 4 -Growing Up as Boys and Girls In this chapter an attempt is made to explain to young boys and girls how their 'being' (ie boys and girls) plays an important part in forging their identities. It attempts to explain how societal norms fashion/ teach children that is acceptable from them, what they can and cannot do. Over a period, young children, especially girls, get accustomed to accepting these constraints as the norm, not realizing that it is only a fallacy that has been created by other people and need not be uniform across the world. The lesson also attempts to explain how these 'assigned 'roles prepare young boys and girls for their subsequent roles in the world as grown men and women. It also attempts to explain that this differential treatment for boys and girls is prevalent in many societies worldwide and not limited to India. The work undertaken by women is less valued than men globally. The effects of gender inequality, sown during childhood reflect in adult life at the workspace too.

19. Using two entirely different locations and cultures, the lesson very effectively brings out the effect of societal norms on role allocation for children from birth till

adulthood. Samoan culture in the 1920s encouraged workload to be shared between boys and girls, with no distinction between the two. Conversely, Indian culture in the 1960s (in Madhya Pradesh) clearly demarcated how boys and girls should behave, what freedoms they could have, what each could, and could not, do and so forth, thereby clearly demarcating distinctive lines of behaviour along which the groups had to conduct themselves.

20. First mention of girls' insecurity Interestingly, for the first time in the text, mention is made of the insecurity felt by girls. The playground of the girls' school, secluded for safety (why, and from whom?), effectively poses an unanswered question. Further, upon cessation of school, the fact that boys 'watched' as hundreds of schoolgirls crowded the narrow streets' is not complimentary. The most telling statement (highlighted in blue in the relevant extract below) is how girls would walk home in groups, perhaps because they 'carried fears of being teased or attacked'. The fact that girls needed to be 'protected' at school, while playing, is revealing. A school, like an extension of the home, is meant to be a haven from danger and prying eyes. The fact that the girls feared for their well-being from being molested/ harassed is indicative of the sexual/ gender-based harassment that persisted as long back as the 1960s, as it sadly does today. However, the topic of girls feeling unsafe, or the fear of harassment is dropped thereafter, and not developed any further. An extract of the relevant text from the book which describes the difference in the layout of the girls' school, vis a vis the boys, and the aberrant behaviour of the boys towards girls (apparently unchecked) as they head home, is reproduced below.

Growing up male in Madhya Pradesh in the 1960s

The following is adapted from an account of experiences of being in a small town in Madhya Pradesh in the 1960s.

From Class VI onwards, boys and girls went to separate schools. The girls' school was designed very differently from the boys' school. They had a central courtyard where they played in total seclusion and



Why do girls like to go to school together in groups?

Make a drawing of a street or a park in your neighbourhood. Show the different kinds of activities young boys and girls may be engaged in. You could do this individually or in groups.

Are there as many girls as boys in your drawing? Most probably you would have drawn fewer girls. Can you think of reasons why there are fewer women and girls in your neighbourhood streets, parks and

safety from the outside world. The boys' school had no such courtyard and our playground was just a big space attached to the school. Every evening, once school was over, the boys watched as hundreds of school girls crowded the narrow streets. As these girls walked on the streets, they looked so purposeful. This was unlike the boys who used the streets as a place to stand around idling, to play, to try out tricks with their bicycles. For the girls, the street was simply a place to get straight home. The girls always went in groups, perhaps because they also carried fears of being teased or attacked.

Fig 7 - Extract from Unit 3 Chapter 4 of standard 7, Social and Political Life Part 2, NCERT

21. The narrative then shifts to how society, in the most apparently insignificant and innocuous manner, starts to condition the behaviour of young children at infancy itself which gets reinforced over time with repetition. Starting with which toys boys and girls should play with, how each group should dress, how they should talk and converse, each activity is moderated as per the community's norms. These are subtle ways of telling young children, what roles they are 'expected' to play as adults in life. As a fallout, children often end up choosing school subjects and careers based on this conditioning. The questions/ activity posed to children are thought provoking and

have to potential to generate healthy debate on gender parity issues. An extract of an activity is placed below.

Make a drawing of a street or a park in your neighbourhood. Show the different kinds of activities young boys and girls may be engaged in. You could do this individually or in groups.

Are there as many girls as boys in your drawing? Most probably you would have drawn fewer girls. Can you think of reasons why there are fewer women and girls in your neighbourhood streets, parks and markets in the late evenings or at night?

Are girls and boys doing different activities? Can you think of reasons why this might be so? What would happen if you replaced the girls with the boys and vice-versa?

Fig 8 - Extract from Unit 3 Chapter 4 of standard 7, Social and Political Life Part 2, NCERT

22. The narrative then addresses the issue of how society does not value work equally between men and women and how both do not share equal status in society. Through a short story, the fact that housework and looking after family members is not considered 'real' work in most households is brought out. It is also stated that housework is considered something that comes 'naturally' to women and hence need not be paid for. Implicitly, it is conveyed that housework is essentially a girl's/woman's job and devalued, creating stereotypes that get propagated and reinforced as the children grow up.

23. The lesson develops the topic further by describing the wide array of work that comprises housework and the back breaking effort it involves. It also introduces the inequality in incomes of domestic helps (predominantly women) and men employed

in the unorganized sectors, thereby undermining the effort and long hours spent by such workers. The lesson then speaks of the efforts made by governments to facilitate work by women beyond the home and concludes. The questions that follow are adequate to revise the gist of the lesson ie stereotyping and undervalued house work undertaken by women.

24. Chapter 5 – Women change the world The inspirationally titled chapter addresses the issues faced by women at different kinds of work places outside the home, the stereotyped images that are associated with women at work and women's struggle for parity at the workplace. Following the interactive method of learning, students are asked to associate various occupations like farming, nursing, teaching, factory work, piloting, etc with either men or women. The results are then compared to derive the stereotyped impressions that people hold. Farming is invariably associated with men, even though nearly 84 per cent of Indian rural women participate in the activity. Such myths need to be busted.

25. The impression that certain jobs (such as soldiering or becoming scientists) could be done only by men as women were not capable enough, is addressed. As a fallout, family support to girls to pursue certain subjects is often subdued. In many instances, girls are encouraged to drop studies and get marriage immediately after completing school. The pressure young children face from parents in pursuit of their studies, is described through a short story. However, the impact of the story is minimal. Whilst the topic of the lesson speaks of how women are changing the world, the illustrated story describes the story of a boy who wishes to study history, while his parents are pressurizing him to take up science. The story could have been more effective if a young girl's (rather than a boy's) academic pursuits/ challenges could have been described, at least in this chapter given its title.

26. Notwithstanding the same, the lesson is interspersed with tales of how women over the years are breaking old molds in becoming self-sufficient and breaking new ground in male dominated occupational bastions by becoming train drivers, soldiers, scientists, etc. The lesson dwells protractedly on the struggle for education by women since the 1800s and then transitions onto the state of women's schooling and education in today's age. The literacy figures of the census of 1961 and 2001 are compared to indicate how, though absolute literacy figures for women have increased nearly fourfold, they still lag those for men by a substantial margin. The topic then shifts onto the phenomena of SC / ST/ Muslim girls dropping out of school early. Various reasons are ascribed to this phenomenon such as the non-availability of schools (and/or teachers) in the vicinity, no transport available, poverty, priority given to sons over daughters, discrimination at school due to religion/ caste, etc.

27. The lesson thereafter briefly describes women's movement over the years as the catalyst that has brought about improvement in the sectors of legal reform, violence, and health. The individual and collective effort of women to bring about this change using various strategies has been lauded, a few of which have then been described. In the section on campaigning, mention is made of efforts to alleviate violence against women. Mention is made of the law passed in 2006 against domestic violence and the guidelines passed by the Supreme Court in 1997 to protect women against sexual harassment at the workplace and within educational institutions. An extract of the relevant portion mentioning the aspects is reproduced below.

Campaigns to fight discrimination and violence against women are an important part of the women's movement. Campaigns have also led to new laws being passed. A law was passed in 2006 to give women who face physical and mental violence within their homes, also called domestic violence, some legal protection.

Similarly, efforts made by the women's movement led the Supreme Court to formulate guidelines in 1997 to protect women against sexual harassment at the workplace and within educational institutions.

Fig 9 - Extract from Unit 3 Chapter 5 of standard 7, Social and Political Life Part 2, NCERT

28. The campaign against dowry deaths finds special mention in the text. The chapter concludes with brief descriptions of campaigning for women's issues by means of raising awareness, launching protests, and showing solidarity with those involved in these movements. Unfortunately, no further mention is made of the prevalence of physical/ sexual/ harassment against women either at home, in public spaces or the workplace, either in the text or the questions that follow.

29. Chapter 10 – Struggles for Equality In the last chapter of standard VII (an extension of the first), a very brief mention of the difficulties faced by women, when seeking legal recourse in cases of violence perpetrated against them, is made. It contains no details of the numbers of women affected, types of violence perpetrated, where the violence/ harassment occurred or who the offenders were. It is a passing mention and does not contribute to the children's understanding of the prevalence of this scourge. The relevant portion is as reproduced.

Over 1,500 persons attended a public hearing in Lucknow in 2001 to protest violence against women. Over 15 cases of violence against women were heard by a jury of eminent women who played the role of judges. This people's jury helped highlight the lack of support in the legal system for women who seek justice in such cases.

Fig 10 - Extract from Unit 1 Chapter 10 of standard 7, Social and Political Life Part 2, NCERT

Content analysis of class 8 syllabus

30. Social and Political Life Part 3 of the class VIII syllabus comprises chapters essentially focused on the Constitution, the Parliament, the judiciary, social justice and marginalization, and economic presence of the government. Whilst prima facie nothing related to gender parity or gender-based violence appears to form part of the Part 3 text, a scan of the chapters needs to be undertaken, nevertheless.

31. Chapter 4 – Parliament and the Making of Laws Interestingly, while the essence of this chapter in Unit 2 of the book is to explain the functioning of the Parliament and how laws are made for the citizens of the country, a relevant example to the subject at hand has been chosen by the authors of the book to do so. The formulation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 has been selected as the case study for explaining the concept. The section commences by briefly defining domestic violence and thereafter explains how the issue was brought to the notice of law makers in Parliament (ie the legislative agency).

Domestic violence refers to the injury or harm or threat of injury or harm caused by an adult male, usually the husband, against his wife. Injury may be caused by physically beating up the woman or by emotionally abusing her. Abuse of the woman can also include verbal, sexual and economic abuse. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 extends the understanding of the term 'domestic' to include all women who 'live or have lived together in a shared household' with the male member who is perpetrating the violence.

Fig 11 - Extract from Unit 2 Chapter 4 of standard 8, Social and Political Life Part 3, NCERT

32. Case study on the development of the Domestic Violence Law Through the medium of a pictorial story, the chapter traces the development of this law from complaints received in 1991 regarding the violence suffered by women at home at the hands of their husbands, till it become a law in 2006. In 1991, domestic violence was covered under criminal law and not considered a civil offence. Victims had no other recourse, but to suffer in silence. As the complaints gained traction, common protestors, women's rights groups, legal organizations, the NCW, media and other organizations got together to raise awareness about the prevalence of this social ill and the need to curb it. Parliament was forced to acknowledge the problem and the demands of the protestors to act. In 2002, when the draft Bill appeared as a 'diluted' version of the one proposed by protestors originally in 1999, various women's organizations again took up cudgels through numerous press conferences, online petitions and representations to Parliamentary Committees to seek a more substantial law. The comprehensive law finally came into effect in 2006. The example brings out the participative nature of citizens in the framing of a country's laws through the Parliament.

33. While admittedly the example fits well within the narrative of the lesson about creation of laws, an opportunity to expose students to this ill of society, is lost. Considering that this instance is effectively the first protracted mention of gender-based crime in the school curriculum, no effort is made by the authors to explain the malaise in general, and domestic violence in particular. No data is presented about how rampant the practice is and how it is not restricted to any religion or strata of society. Possibly, if such data had been discussed or presented, it would have raised the possibility of the discussion among students about how such a malpractice could exist in modern India, nearly fifty years after independence (in 1991). The even more

pertinent questions of how the issue remained unchallenged in the legal framework of the country and the apparent disregard of the polity to address it holistically, could have been asked. While the purpose of explaining the functioning of the Parliament in making laws is put across well, an opportunity to introduce an extremely sensitive topic related to gender-based violence, is lost. To be fair, a snippet encouraging equality in relationships is included in the text (reproduced below). However, without the contextual background of how mutual respect is absent in some relationships and what transpires in an abusive relationship, it has little relevance.

What do you understand by 'domestic violence'? List the two rights that the new law helped achieve for women who are survivors of violence.

Can you list one process that was used to make more people aware of the need for this law?

From the above storyboard, can you list two different ways in which people lobbied Parliament?

In the following poster, what do you understand by the phrase 'Equal Relationships are Violence Free'?

Often women who face violence or are abused are seen as victims. But women struggle in several different ways to survive these situations. Therefore, it is more accurate to refer to them as survivors rather than as victims.

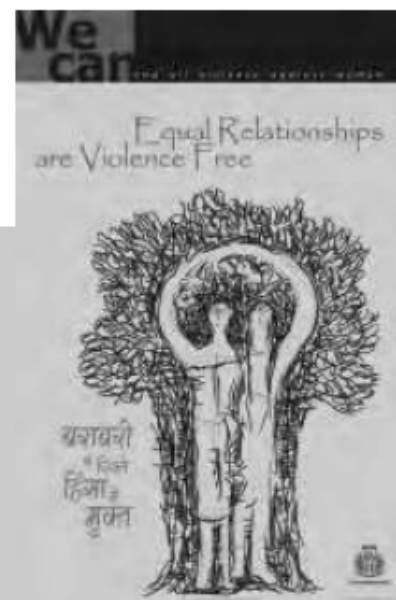


Fig 12 - Extract from Unit 2 Chapter 4 of standard 8, Social and Political Life Part 3, NCERT

34. Chapter 5 – Judiciary As in chapter 4, while the primary focus of the lesson is to explain the functioning of the various arms of the Indian judiciary and its shortcomings, a case study pertaining to crimes against women has been chosen to build the narrative. This selection could not be fortuitous, and credit must be accorded to the authors of the textbook for this choice. An honest attempt has obviously been made to place socially relevant cases center stage out of the hundreds of thousands available, that could have been chosen for inclusion in the chapter. That a case of

dowry death has been analyzed, whereas any case of acquittal/ conviction (for example any other high profile murder case), could have as easily served the same purpose, needs to be lauded. Like domestic violence covered earlier, it serves the purpose of introducing young students to another ill prevalent in society.

35. Case study on dowry death The lesson begins by explaining the functioning of the courts in India and then describes the structure of the Indian judiciary. In the explanation of the 'appellate' system of the courts, the progression of the case of State (Delhi) vs Laxman Kumar and Others (1985) from the lower courts to the Supreme Court is described. The case pertains to the burning of a young 20-year-old woman, Sudha, for dowry (on 01 Dec 1980), by her husband and in-laws a few months after her wedding in Feb 1980. The narrative describes the events through the account of eyewitness neighbors and Sudha's family, in terms of the harassment she faced for not bringing adequate dowry into her husband's home upon getting married. The dowry demands made upon Sudha's family, her screams (upon burning) on the night of 01 Dec 1980 and her statement to the rescuing neighbours incriminating her husband and in-laws (mother and brother-in-law) for burning her, led the Trial Court to declare them guilty and sentenced to death. The accused argued their innocence and challenged this verdict in the High Court in 1983, which found Sudha's death to be accidental and acquitted the three. Outraged by the acquittal granted by the High Court, protestors challenged its decision and filed a petition against it in the Supreme Court. Having heard the appeals made by the two parties, the Supreme Court found Laxman Kumar and his mother guilty, sentencing them to life imprisonment, while acquitting Laxman's brother-in-law, the third accused. The narrative then moves onto differentiating between criminal and civil law.

36. Like the handling of the case study on domestic violence previously, in this instance too, while the case has been described well from the contextual point of view of the chapter, it does not address the issue of the crime per se. No effort has been made to explain the dowry system, its effects on the physical and psychological health of brides/ wives, the widespread prevalence of the social ill across all spectrum of society, etc. The fact that dowry had been prohibited in India as early as 1961 in India (vide the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961), and yet continued to persist for as long thereafter (and still does to an extent), could have been discussed. The absence of any description of the scourge, is again a lost opportunity to broach the topic with young impressionable adults, who would be the harbingers of positive change when they come of age.

37. Importantly, associated topics could have been introduced. The ‘burden’ perceived by parents (especially those not well off economically) of marrying off daughters upon growing up, by paying large dowries, could have been spoken of. The traditional Indian ‘preference’ for a male child (an heir), along with this burden for dowry, has been identified by many scholars as one of the causes for the skewed sex ratio in India and the prevalence of malpractices such as pre-natal sex determination, female feticide and infanticide, poorer health and education levels of girls vis a vis boys, etc. The fact that the Indian population comprises 48.04% females as compared to 51.96% males and that India ranks 189 out of 201 countries in terms of adverse female to male ratio could have been brought out and discussed further in the chapter. The government’s laudable ‘Beti Bachao Beti Padhao’ campaign, aimed at arresting (and correcting) the declining child sex ratio nationally (and specifically in certain critical districts), along with the broad aim of ending gender discrimination, would have been reason enough to dwell more on the subject. If this is not considered a

nationally important topic to be taught in social science class at school, then it is difficult to fathom what could be. An indicative female/ male sex ratio across the globe is as reproduced.

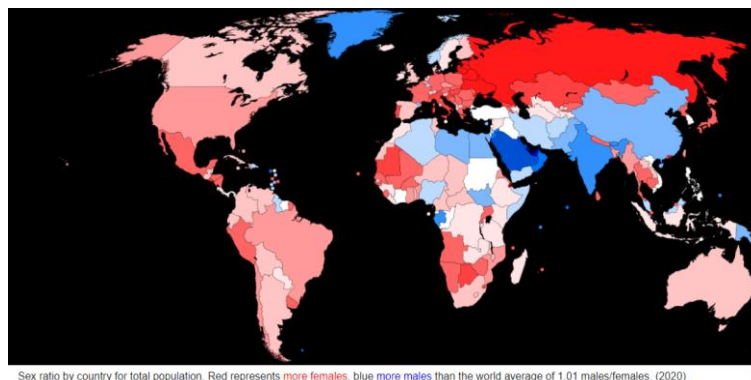


Fig 13 – Global child sex ratio (Source- Wikipedia)

38. As on previous occasions in the text, a snippet does pose a question regarding ‘persistent’ harassment of girls by a group of boys in the context of understanding law, but no discussion about it is included. The relevant extract is reproduced below.

Fill in the table given below based on what you have understood about criminal and civil law.

Description of Violation	Branch of Law Followed	Procedure to be
A group of girls are persistently harassed by a group of boys while walking to school.		
A tenant who is being forced to move out files a case in court against the landlord.		

Fig 14 - Extract from Unit 2 Chapter 5 of standard 8, Social and Political Life Part 3, NCERT

39. While it is clearly implied through the snippet that harassment is a crime (through the questions that follow), but why it happens at all, what needs to be done about it and how rampant it is, is not addressed at all. Associated issues like ‘glorification’ of eve teasing as depicted in some movies/ serials, acid attacks on girls, groping in buses and public issues could have been discussed, or at least mentioned, but are not. The minimal mention given to this topic seems to suggest that

harassment is a 'fact/ way of life' for women (not necessarily only Indian) and the only way to address it, is by punitive action through the law. No holistic discussion or solution to the problem is solicited from the class participants. While punitive action must be used when/ where necessary, it must not be the first response. A preventive approach through education and awareness, targeted at sensitizing the likely offenders (ie boys/ young adults), needs to be adopted as a start point. It must be believed that they would be amenable to appreciate the concerns of the women/ girls about sexual harassment/ gender-based violence, if the scourge is to end holistically. Punitive action must be the last recourse, when all else fails.

40. Chapter 7 is titled Understanding Marginalization. However, the text is limited to addressing the issues faced by Adivasis and minorities, essentially Muslims. Though chapter 8, titled Confronting Marginalization' mentions women as one of the marginalized groups, insignificant discussion in the text is appropriated to it.

Content analysis of class 9 syllabus

41. The class 9 Social and Political Life syllabus takes on a pitch markedly different from those covered previously. The focus of the 6 chapters comprising the book is entirely on democracy and the related processes involved. Unlike its predecessors, it is not limited to issues in India but takes a very global view of the democratic processes around the world. However, no mention of gender parity or gender-based violence of any relevance is made in the entire syllabus for this class.

42. Considering the exhaustive coverage of the singular topic of democracy over an entire academic year, students would undoubtedly become well versed in the working of democracies, and associated activities like elections, fundamental rights, electoral politics, working of institutions, etc. However, by following this syllabus, while aware citizenry towards the state and its functions would be ensured, the same

cannot be stated as far as facilitating growth of healthy well- rounded personalities, positive individual traits, awareness about social ills, conduct as responsible adults, etc is concerned.

43. At an age when young adolescents are naturally eager to learn more about the other gender and the world, nothing related to the topic is covered in the classroom. In this paper, sex education is not what is being recommended to be covered in classes. It is proposed that the students' conduct as adults in life, both in the personal and professional sphere, be examined by discussing what is expected of men in terms of general civility/ courtesy and giving women their due respect and space at home, in public places and at the workplace. As part of the discussion, the physical and emotional changes that occur at this stage in life could also be discussed in a non-risqué manner to avoid embarrassment and keep the discussion on track. These aspects are however not covered at all, though opportunities exist. Rather than retain only democracy as the sole essence of the syllabus in class 9, a more balanced syllabus could be considered. This could include a chapter or two on growing up as adolescents, ways to interact with the other gender, expectations of young women from their male counterparts, courtesy/ civility in public life, etc.

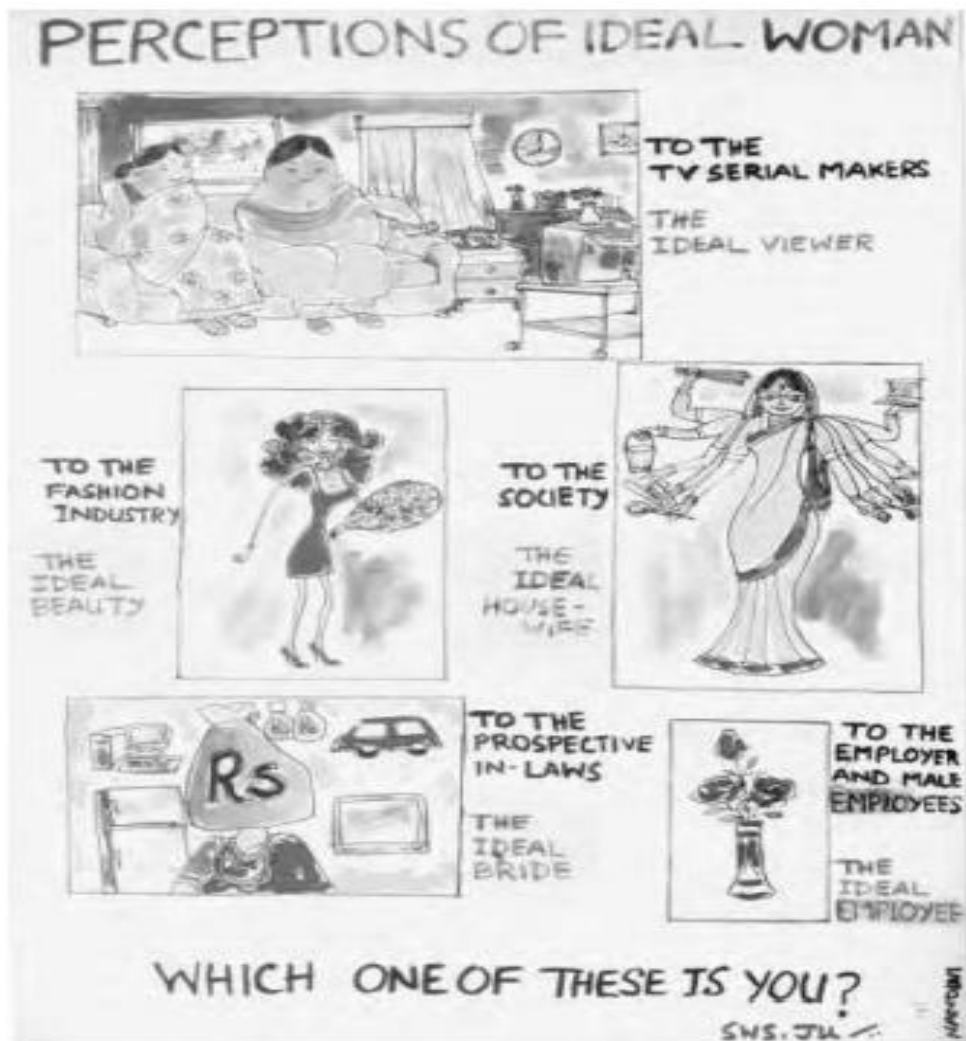
Content Analysis of class 10 syllabus

44. Class 10 is the last class at school in which social science is taught commonly to all students. Up till class 10, all subjects are taught commonly without segregation of streams. Therefore, under the present arrangement, effectively this is the last opportunity which exists to expose adolescents to issues related to gender parity, gender- based violence and sexual harassment. The subject is dropped subsequently in classes 11 and 12 unless a student chooses to study humanities, with Sociology as a subject.

45. The book is titled Democratic Politics. The lessons in this book build on the fundamentals of democracy and governance introduced in earlier chapters. Complex concepts/ terms like federalism, majoritarianism, sharing of power in coalition forms of government, social differences, religious movements, black power movement, etc are well explained using case studies and discussions/ activities. Examples of these aspects from around the world, from countries as far and varied as Belgium, Ireland, Sweden, Romania, Yugoslavia, US, etc are used extensively in the text. Contextual parallels are drawn with similarities that exist in India. Comprehensive questions/ teasers are posed to the students to elicit desired responses. In effect, topics are handled very comprehensively, which should serve to broaden the intellectual horizon of the keen student.

46. Chapter 4 – Gender, Religion and Caste This chapter of the book essentially looks at the diversity in the democratic process brought about by differences in gender, religion, and caste. Political expression reflecting such differences is discussed, and encouraged, in the lesson. As the title suggests, the first part deals with gender in politics in India. The lesson starts by consolidating the explanation of ‘traditional’ division of work between men and women based on ‘stereotypes’ and expectations of society, which had been covered in previous classes. It is reiterated that the basis of this distribution of work is based societal expectations and is a purely hierarchical social division of labour. The expectation that women are ‘meant’ to do all the household work (which entails no perceived value), which is underrated and not paid for, is explained. That women do work outside the home while collecting water and firewood, working the fields, etc is lost on most people who do not count this as ‘work’. The role of women, constituting half of humanity, in public life, remains largely unrecognized. Over years, women agitated for equal rights

through what came to be popularly known as ‘feminist’ movements, helping improve their representation in public life. Voting rights, opportunities for education and work in male dominated bastions like the scientific field, universities, etc became accessible to them. The dichotomy of the varied expectations of being the ‘ideal’ women, as perceived by various sections of society, is well explained in a cartoon contained in the book (as reproduced below).



Discuss all these perceptions of an ideal woman that prevail in our society. Do you agree with any of these? If not, what is your image of an ideal woman?

Fig 15 - Extract from Unit 2 Chapter 4 of standard10, Democratic Politics-II, NCERT

47. However, the question posed at the bottom of the cartoon, viz ‘What is your image of an ideal woman’ appears to defeat the purpose of the cartoon itself. It prompts the students, of both genders, to create an image of an ‘ideal’ woman yet

again, thereby placing unnecessary expectations upon the roles to be upheld by a woman and creating a stereotype, rather than just letting her be.

48. In the text following this cartoon, brief reiteration is made of the fact that women are oppressed (due India being a patriarchal society), lag in education and opportunities due biases of parents/ society, paid lesser for equal work done and have a poorer child sex ratio, as compared to men. Patriarchy is defined in the text as well. The specific relevant extracts are reproduced below.

Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Norway and Finland, the participation of women in public life is very high.

In our country, women still lag much behind men despite some improvement since Independence. Ours is still a male-

proportion of girl students go for higher studies. When we look at school results, girls perform as well as boys, if not better in some places. But they drop out because parents prefer to spend their resources for their boys' education rather than spending equally on their sons and daughters.

- No wonder the proportion of women among the highly paid and valued jobs is still very small. On an average an Indian woman works one hour more than an average man every day. Yet much of her work is not paid

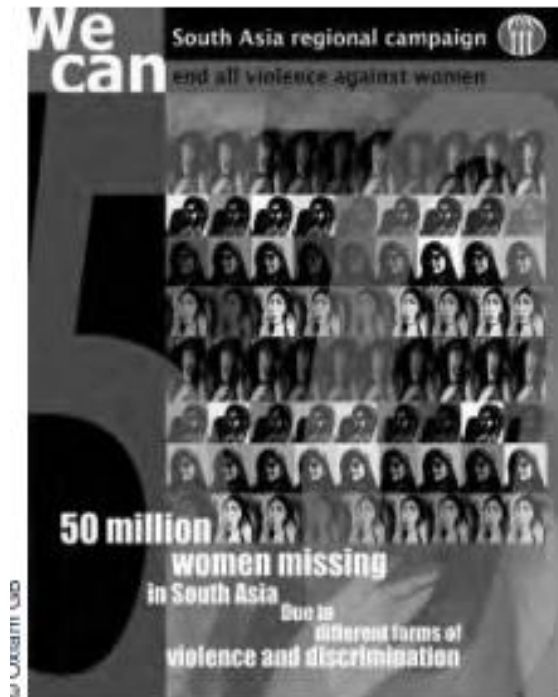
dominated, patriarchal society. Women face disadvantage, discrimination and oppression in various ways:

- The literacy rate among women is only 54 per cent compared with 76 per cent among men. Similarly, a smaller

and therefore often not valued.

- The Equal Wages Act provides that equal wages should be paid to equal work. However in almost all areas of work, from sports and cinema, to factories and fields, women are paid less than men, even when both do exactly the same work.

- In many parts of India parents prefer to have sons and find ways to have the girl child aborted before she is born. Such sex-selective abortion led to a decline in child sex ratio (number of girl children per thousand boys) in the



country to merely 927. As the map shows, this ratio has fallen below 850 or even 800 in some places.

There are reports of various kinds of harassment, exploitation and violence against women. Urban areas have become particularly unsafe for women.

They are not safe even within their own home from beating, harrassment and other forms of domestic violence.

Women's political representation

All this is well known. Yet issues related to women's well being or otherwise are not given adequate attention. This has led many feminists and women's movements to the conclusion that unless women control power, their problems will not get adequate attention. One way to ensure this is to have more women as elected representatives.

In India, the proportion of women in legislature has been very low. For example, the percentage of elected women members in Lok Sabha has never reached even 10 per cent of its total strength. Their share in the state assemblies is less than 5 per cent. In this respect, India is among the bottom group of nations in the world (see the graph below). India is behind the

Fig 16 - Extracts from Unit 2 Chapter 4 of standard 10, Democratic Politics-II, NCERT

49. It is noteworthy, that as in previous classes, a very brief, but pertinent, reference is made to the 'condition' of women in India (in terms of indices such as wages, employment opportunities, health, child sex ratio, etc- highlighted in blue in the extracts above). Importantly for the cause at hand, highlighted in yellow, are the even more brief, but shameful, admissions to the 'treatment' meted out to women wherein they are unsafe even within their own home, vulnerable to beating harassment and domestic violence. Though it is qualified that urban areas 'have become particularly unsafe for women', it must not be assumed that rural areas are any safer. It is quite possible that higher awareness levels of women in urban areas translate into higher reported cases of mistreatment at the hands of men as compared

to their counterparts in rural areas. Given the stereotype and discrimination against women pan-India, it would be prudent to assume that this sad commentary holds true equally, if not more, for rural women as well. Again, the text fails to follow up the topic broached, and this remains the only reference to sexual/ gender-based violence in the chapter. The narrative then veers off to representation of women in elected houses of government and how that could be increased to address women related issues more effectively.

CHAPTER 4

OVERVIEW OF NCERT SYLLABI OF CLASSES 6-10 ADDRESSING

AWARENESS ABOUT GENDER- BASED CRIMES

1. Analysis of the syllabi of Social and Political science from classes 6 to 10 of the NCERT indicates that, to a substantial extent, the stated objectives of gender parity have been addressed. The syllabi also introduce young students to a range of themes as varied as diversity, caste, differences in society - religious, social, economic, gender based, opportunity wise and so forth, democracy, governance, democratic politics, etc. It is a vast canvas and is contextual in its approach. The questions/ activities are stimulating and should serve to generate healthy discussions amongst the students. The questions/ activities contained in the snippets / ‘asides’ are designed to serve to ‘steer’ the classroom discourse in the desired direction without undue digression.

2. Inadequate focus on nurturing human qualities? However, upon tracking the intent of NCERT syllabus formulation in the classroom lessons, it appears that while a lot of focus has been placed on the individual and society, gender equality, democracy, interplay of diversity, etc, lesser emphasis has been given to the potential of interplay between young adolescents of two genders present in the classroom. Development of understanding of varied and complex topics like caste, Dalits, discrimination, religious diversity, governance, judiciary, economic disparity and its effects, differential opportunities, etc largely remain the focus of the lessons throughout the five classes. Admittedly, there is reasonable coverage of gender parity matters spread across the text. Non recognition of household work as ‘real’ work,

lesser wages for same work done, unequal opportunities for education, stereotyping women, etc are mentioned in the lessons at interspersed points.

3. However, there is little value education in the text in terms of content/ activities/ questions directed towards building of character/ personality of the students or enhancing their awareness towards gender violence/ harassment sensitization. Whilst the work done for Dalits and marginalized sections of society since independence has been waxed eloquent, a humane approach towards the issues facing the feminine gender, especially in terms of the violence/ harassment directed towards her, has been given the summary treatment. Development of human qualities and sensitization towards treating women well, which directly affects nearly half the population, is not given the importance it deserves. The basis of the argument being made in this paper in favour of including such topics is to get young people to talk about such issues on a common platform. It stems from the fact that boys need to be made aware of the right from the wrong and be sensitized about respecting the physical/ emotional space of the feminine gender. It is opined that discussion in the classroom needs to be directed more at 'involving' the boys (the perpetrator group so to speak), with the advantage that women would be present as equal participants in the debates/ discussions.

4. Conservative outlook precluding discussion? The text shies away from unambiguously including issues related to violence directed towards women in all forms, be it rape, acid attacks, domestic violence, molestation, eve teasing, etc. The problems are pan-India and all too well known/ documented, appearing daily as news items in the print and electronic media. It is not that students are not aware of these incidents. Given the ready availability of internet and social media, these students are aware of the crimes being committed against women. However, the news

sensationalizes, and not sensitizes. How such crimes scar women/ girls for life, why they occur, what needs to be done to alleviate the problem and allay their fears, needs to be discussed with maturity. Despite the ubiquity of the internet in India over the past few decades, most Indian home environments remain quite conservative in their outlook. There is certain awkwardness / embarrassment in talking about this topic in many homes. It is quite possible that some families may even be disinclined to discuss these topics in the confines of the home. Elders in the family may not be comfortable broaching this topic with adolescents or know what/ how to discuss it.

5. Need for harsh facts to be presented upfront Yet, it needs to be done if a mindset change is to be brought about. Under these circumstances, the school has a critical role to play to plug this gap. However, other than fleeting references to exploitation/ harassment/ domestic violence against women in generic terms at a few places in the text, there is no significant discussion on these topics anywhere in the text. Admittedly, on two instances, domestic violence and dowry death are used as case studies. However, even on these two occasions, the treatment to the topic of gender violence is secondary to the context of the narrative. Essentially, description of the prevalence of these offences is missing. No data on the number of rapes that occur every day all over India or the al- too-common cases of groping/ sexual harassment in public places / transport is spoken of. In the absence of stark realities, the morbid reality remains hidden. Unless shock and abhorrence over such incidents is generated in healthy discussion, not many boys would realize the extent of the problem and the need to curb such deviant behaviour. It is possible that following classroom discussions, some boys may even query their women family members at home about indignities that the latter may have endured, thereby broaching the topic within the confines of the home.

6. Another aspect which recommends itself to broaching the topic of gender-based violence and harassment at school is the fact that unlike earlier times, many schools, including those run by the government, are co-educational. Discussing the topic with boys and girls together would facilitate the girls explaining their trauma and revulsion when harassed/ molested/ beaten/ teased/ groped, etc. There could not be a better way of getting the point across to the other gender group. No one could be better placed to explain the trauma than the survivors/ afflicted/ risk group themselves. The boys could be sensitized of how women feel and what social behaviour towards women/ girls is expected of them. The argument being made is that the discussion must go beyond parity in education, work, wages and opportunities, issues which have been mentioned in the text at certain places. Sexual harassment and violation of women's dignity goes beyond the aforesaid and is more overarching; hence, the necessity for its inclusion.

7. Arguments against inclusion of topic in school syllabus Cynics may argue against this argument by suggesting that the discussion could become lewd and degenerate into something counterproductive. The point merits consideration and cannot be waived off/ dismissed summarily. It must be conceded that the topic of gender violence and sexual harassment is sensitive and possibly can be mishandled by the insensitive or untrained teacher. However, with identification of suitable teachers and after imparting necessary training, there is no reason to believe that this topic cannot be handled with the gravitas it deserves. Not including the aspects of gender-based violence out of apprehension that it may not succeed or be counterproductive would be to concede defeat prematurely without putting the idea to the test. There appears nothing to be lost by making the proposed inclusions. Even under present conditions, when the topic is not included in any worthwhile form in any of the school

textbooks, violent crimes against women have not abated. This attempt may prove to be effective to alleviate/ mitigate this social ill.

8. It could also be argued by detractors that girls/ women may not be comfortable talking about such issues, especially in front of boys and/or male teachers. The point again has merit for consideration given the conservative outlook towards such topics in Indian households and the taboo associated with them. However, it is opined that this reticence in discussing such topics is possibly the reason why they have not been addressed till date and continue unabated in twenty first century India. If such issues are not addressed with adolescent boys at home, and the topics are not discussed at school, there would be no avenue left to address the same. Under the circumstances, the topic needs to be broached at school.

9. Adolescents' must introspect to effect change The primary focus of the present content of the textbooks appears to be the enabling of students to become citizens who comprehend national and global issues well. Their becoming responsible empathetic adults, having compassion and respect for others (especially women) and conforming to civilized behavior appears to be less in focus. Character development through awareness of the realities of gender interaction in the world we live in, is minimal in our textbooks and needs to be included. The proposal for inclusion of gender violence related material in the text is not to pursue/ teach moral science in terms of preaching what (or what not) to do. As rebellious teenagers, it may be too much of an ask. Even moral policing is not proposed by the inclusion. The aim is to sequentially expose adolescents to the aberrant behaviour of some men towards women (leading to violence/ harassment/ molestation, etc) and appealing to the sense of responsibility of boys/ men in introspecting about the issue. The aim is to stimulate their young minds towards identifying the correct way to interact between men and

women. It needs to be realized that ignoring the existence of a problem or the scale of its preponderance does not make the problem go away. Identification and acceptance of the problem are the first steps towards its resolution. Unless issues such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, molestation and other heinous crimes against women are not accepted as being commonly prevalent (and not treated as the exception), and the scale of prevalence not spoken of in the classroom, there is no hope of redressal.

10. Chance to Regain Lost Opportunity Pre-adolescent and adolescent phases of a child's life are considered extremely important in terms of building character by learning life skills and gaining academic competence. Along with academics, various co-curricular, extra-curricular (conducted through clubs at school), games and sports activities play an important role in molding the personality and professional standing of a child. The investment made in the child at school in terms of what academic and values are imparted to him/ her, along with the environment at home, possibly decide the future traits of the adult. With the student (especially male) not being sensitized to the existence of gender-based violence and the need to respect the physical and mental space of women, the opportunity to mould an individual in this aspect is lost. Unfortunately, in the current syllabi, where references to such occurrences are minimal, the opportunity is missed repeatedly from classes 6-10. More importantly, in classes 11 and 12, possibly the most critical phase of school life as adolescents, this aspect of learning how to grow up as responsible adults is missed out altogether. As subjects split into science, commerce and humanities streams (broadly speaking), the option of teaching social science en masse as a common subject to all students, is lost forever.

11. A fraction of those students who choose to pursue Sociology as one of their subjects in the Humanities stream may continue to get exposed to social science aspects. However, for the remaining majority, it is a complete break from social science and related aspects of education as they start to doggedly pursue competitive professional exams or marks in exams. The education system in class 11 and 12 is so single mindedly focused on marks and exams that it leaves next to no time for personal growth of an individual. For the time at school to be gainfully employed for developing life skills and character in terms of how these students interact as adults socially, it is important that this aspect be included in their syllabus. It is the last, and possibly the most potent opportunity, to effect a social change and must not be missed. Given the maturity, zest, awareness, and keenness to question the status quo of senior secondary students, this effort would pay rich dividends.

CHAPTER 5

INCLUSIONS/ CHANGES PROPOSED IN SCHOOL SYLLABI TO

INCREASE AWARENESS ABOUT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

1. Progressing with the premise that topics and associated activities/ questions specifically targeting gender-based violence and sexual harassment need to be included in textbooks to increase awareness among students about these social ills, there is need to identify what content can be added. The modalities of how to progress the topic sequentially through class 6 till class 12, what mode of teaching could be applied, how/ if at all the topic needs to be assessed, who will teach it, what training needs to be imparted to the teachers prior to commencing the classroom interaction and other related aspects would also need to be considered. As it stands, no other educational system (including foreign education boards) contains any indicators on the subject which could be used as a template to follow. Under the circumstances, a fresh look/ approach will need to be adopted to address the problem identified.

2. Gender sensitization aspects in NEP 2020 A new NEP has been promulgated after more than three decades to align India's education system with global standards. Gender sensitization has been addressed in the NEP 2020. The NEP recognizes that girls fall within the Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Group (SEDG) who are underrepresented in education at all levels, with the decline in higher education being steeper. In addressing this anomaly, it recommends measures such as organizing 'cycling and walking groups' to encourage girls to stay in schools, considering the 'safety benefits' this provides. While the measure may work, it is indicative that the policy makers are alive to the reasons of harassment which girl

students face while transiting from home to school and back. Also, the Gender Inclusion Fund (GIF) proposed to be constituted under the NEP 2020, is aimed at providing cycles and better sanitation/ toilet facilities at school to encourage attendance of the girl students, rather than eradicate/ mitigate the moot issue of harassment of girls by boys. No broad guideline/ directive is mentioned in the text of the NEP which is aimed at eradicating/ reducing the menace of such harassment or imparting value education to students to sensitize them about the specific issue of gender violence. The focus of ‘inclusivity’ and ‘equity’ of education of girls at school is primarily in terms of attendance, rather than attempting to sensitize and change the mindset of mindset of boys to dissuade them from harassing girls. Unless the same is stated unequivocally in the NEP as an objective, and a directive given to this effect, the National Curriculum Framework (which would draw from this ‘mother’ document to formulate curricula and syllabi for schools), is unlikely to include any related topic in the new syllabi/ curricula.

3. Notwithstanding the absence of clear directions in the NEP 2020 about addressing the menace of gender-based violence, it is proposed that a two-pronged approach be adopted to mitigate, if not eradicate, violent crimes against women. Whilst the first involves including topics/ data related to crimes against women in the text, the second involves imparting value education to school students to sensitize them to the menace.

4. No Moral Lecturing! In looking for the broad modality on how to address gender sensitivity in the classroom, it must be established ab initio that the intent must not be to simply moral lecture students. While ‘talking down’ works well with primary and (even possibly) middle school children, the approach is likely to fail with many middle school and most senior school students and must be avoided.

Adolescence is universally associated with a sense of rebelliousness and a tendency to question authority and the status quo. These are exactly the tendencies which are tailor made to foster this social awareness being attempted. Rather than curb/ push back against this tendency as teachers/ adults at home are inclined to do, it must be nurtured and encouraged to bring about the positive mindset change. Hence, the approach in the secondary classes must be based on discussion, interaction between students, questioning the status quo and introspection to elicit solutions to the problem. The classical classroom lecture technique, interspersed with discussions/ questions/ activities, may be pursued with middle school classes up till class 8/9. Thereafter, an interactive discussion mode, treating class 10-12 students at par as adults, is expected to result in the desirable output.

5. Relevant content in Class 11/12 Sociology books? To identify the inclusions for this subject in the classrooms, it would be prudent to consider the current content that exist in the NCERT syllabi and then look beyond it for possible additions. Whilst the content of social studies for classes 6-10 has been perused in chapter 3 and analyzed in chapter 4 of this study, an effort needs to be made to objectively peruse the Sociology textbook content for classes 11 and 12 as well. This exercise should reveal if anything relevant to the subject at hand is covered in these textbooks with those students who choose to pursue Humanities in senior secondary school. If relevant material is found in these texts, the same could be considered for duplication for students in other streams as well. In each of these two classes, two books are prescribed as textbooks every year

6. Class 11 Textbook - Introducing Sociology Book 1, titled Introducing Sociology, is the first book of four prescribed. It introduces the subject and its contents to the students. The book explains many terms linked to the subject.

However, in the initial pages itself, where social inequality in India is mentioned, there is no reference to gender inequality or violence, though topics like health, education, employment, and sanitation facilities are mentioned.

Activity 2

The Economic Survey of the Government of India suggests that access to sanitation facilities is just 28 per cent. Find out about other indicators of social inequality, for instance education, health, employment etc.

Fig 17 - Extract from Chapter 1 of standard 11, Part 1, Introducing Sociology, NCERT

7. In another instance of explaining sociological terms, mention is made of the ‘honour killing’ of a sister by her brother to explain the use physical violence/ force as a means of social control. The relevant extract is reproduced below.

Man kills sister for marrying from outside the caste

... The elder brother of a 19-year-old girl here carried out an apparent ‘honour killing’ by allegedly beheading her while she was asleep at a hospital ... police said on Monday.

The girl... was undergoing treatment at ... Hospital for stab wounds after her brother... attacked her on December 16 for marrying outside the caste, they said. She and her lover eloped on December 10 and returned to their houses here on December 16 after getting married, which was opposed by her parents, they said.

The Panchayat also tried to pressurise the couple but they refused to be swayed.

Fig 18 - Extract from Chapter 2 of standard 11, Part 1, Introducing Sociology, NCERT

8. The above is a chilling example of the way in which physical violence is often used against women to subjugate them. Their apparent physical weakness is used to threaten their safety and privacy. The example is revelatory of the fact that violence against women is not necessarily perpetrated by outsiders. More frequently than is acknowledged openly, family members/ acquaintances are the perpetrators. Often violation of a woman through rape/molestation/ harassment takes the form of this physical threat of violence. More such examples are needed to be considered for inclusion when teaching this aspect to students.

9. The section also speaks of the conventional Indian preference for the male child over a female child. The abysmal child sex ratio over the century is described in a tabular form. Importantly, the mindset and bias for this ‘preference’ is tried to be explained through the text and a Telugu expression. These forms of clear biases explaining existing social behaviour must be considered for inclusion, to be taught across the board to students of all streams in senior classes. An extract of the relevant portion is reproduced.

because the new German state withdrew all the protection and welfare schemes which were provided to the families prior to the unification. With growing sense of economic insecurity people responded by refusing to marry. This can also be understood as a case of unintended consequence (Chapter 1).

Family and kinship are thus subject to change and transformation due to macro economic processes but the direction of change need not always be similar for all countries and regions. Moreover, change does not mean the complete erosion of previous norms and structure. Change and continuity co-exist.

How gendered is the family?

The belief is that the male child will support the parents in the old age and

the female child will leave on marriage results in families investing more in a male child. Despite the biological fact that a female baby has better chances of survival than a male baby the rate of infant mortality among female children is higher in comparison to male children in lower age group in India.

The Institution of Marriage

Historically marriage has been found to exist in a wide variety of forms in

Activity 2

A Telegu expression states: 'Bring-ing up a daughter is like watering a plant in another's courtyard'. Find out other such sayings that are contrary. Discuss how popular sayings reflect the social arrangement of a society.

Sex Ratio in India between 1901-2001

Year	Sex Ratio	Year	Sex Ratio
1901	972	1951	946
1911	964	1961	941
1921	955	1971	930
1931	950	1981	934
1941	945	1991	928
2001			(927)*

* In 2001 the sex ratio of girls in 0-6 group was enumerated as 927

The incidence of female foeticide has led to a sudden decline in the sex ratio. The child sex ratio has declined from 934 per thousand males in 1991 to 927 in 2001. The percentage of decline in the child sex ratio is more alarming. The situation of prosperous states like Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra and western Utter Pradesh is all the more grave. In Punjab the child sex ratio has declined to 793 girls per 1,000 boys. In some of the districts of Punjab and Haryana it has fallen below 700.

Fig 19 - Extract from Chapter 3 of standard 11, Part 1, Introducing Sociology, NCERT

10. Again, in chapter 4, titled Culture and Socialization, a reference is made to the apprehension of physical assault perceived by girls/ women under a normal situation. A telling description is made of how, while boys treat the common street as a place of multifarious carefree activities, women/ girls perceive it just as a road to hurry home, even as they possibly are apprehensive about being harassed. The relevant text is reproduced below. The fear/ susceptibility of gender-based violence and sexual harassment felt by girls is palpable and implicit in this description. The unfortunate part of the description in the text is that yet again, there is no build up or detailed discussion about the fear most women face of having their physical dignity/ space being violated even in open public places. Again, an opportunity to discuss these issues is squandered.

How Gendered is Socialisation?

We boys used the streets for so many different things — as a place to stand around watching, to run around and play, try out the manoeuvrability of our bikes. Not so for girls. As we noticed all the time, for girls the street was simply a means to get straight home from school. And even for this limited use of the street they always went in clusters, perhaps because behind their purposeful demeanour they carried the worst fears of being assaulted (Kumar 1986).

Fig 20 - Extract from Chapter 3 of standard 11, Part 1, Introducing Sociology, NCERT

11. Class 11 Textbook – Understanding society This is the second book prescribed for Sociology students of class 11. The book deals with the work done by Indian and foreign sociologists, social structures and changes, the environment and society. Nothing of relevance to gender parity, and specifically to gender-based violence/ harassment, is contained in this volume.

12. Class 12 Textbook - Indian Society This is one of the textbooks for Sociology for class 12 students. In this textbook, under Unit III, the topic ‘The Struggle for Women’s Equality’ comprises two specific sub sections. Section 3.3, titled ‘Family and Kinship’ (covered under the chapter titled Social Institutions,

Continuity and Change), deals essentially with the structure of the Indian family and the various dynamics associated with it under changing environments/ dynamics of work pressures/ marriages/ family business, etc. Whilst female infanticide is mentioned as a term at one place in the text, there is no further reference to it or related gender-violent topic. The text introduces terms such as matrilineal, matriarchal, patriarchal, matrilineal, etc to describe various family forms that exist. Interestingly, a case study in the section on the matrilineal structure of society in the Khasi tribe of Meghalaya tends to highlight the ‘bias of kinship and inheritance towards women’ and the ‘intense role conflict’ it generates for men! Considering the general/ overall adverse bias women face in India in all spheres of life, the reference appears misplaced. Nonetheless, the moot point is that no reference to gender violence / sexual harassment is made in this section.

13. Sub section 5.3, covered under the chapter ‘Patterns of Social Inequality and Exclusion’, is titled ‘Struggle for Women’s equality and Rights’. As the topic suggests, the text essentially explains that gender inequality is not natural/ biological but a creation of society. The narrative describes progression of the various social reform movements over centuries, including those for the abolition of Sati, widow remarriage, denial of education of women, etc. The text covers extracts from two short stories written by women about the plight of women of their ages (1882 and 1905) at the hands of men and the unequal attitude of society towards women. The text also briefly makes a mention of modern issues of the 1970s like domestic violence, rape of women in police custody, dowry murders, representation of women in popular media, and the gendered consequences of unequal development. A reference to the sharp fall in the child sex ratio (cross referred to in Chapter 2 of the book) and the implicit social bias against the girl child representing new challenges of

gender inequality is also made. Perusal of the contents of sub section 2.4 in chapter 2 on the Demographic Structure of Indian Society reveals data about the adverse child sex ratio in greater detail, but no further.

14. It is pertinent that the narrative remains largely repetitive of the basic theme introduced in earlier lessons. Addition of linked details and historical accounts do not add much value to the topical current problems of violence and violation being still faced by women. The narrative continues to remain focused on gender parity/ equality and insignificant mention is made to gender-based violence. The text is rather benign and sanitized and does not address the issue under discussion. The narrative harps on the unequal condition of women and tends to stay silent about the violent treatment often meted out to them by men.

15. Class 12 Textbook – Social Change and Development in India This is the second NCERT textbook prescribed for students pursuing Sociology in class 12. In the last chapter of the book Social Movements (chapter 8), sub section 8.8 deals with the Women's Movement. The section spanning all of three pages briefly traces the role played by women for equal rights since the 19th century and their participation in the fight for national independence. Whilst mentioning various movements for change undertaken by women, it mentions violence without any details. As a snippet however, it briefly mentions the practice of violence against women, albeit perpetrated for varying social reasons. While it does not dwell in detail on the topic, the snippet is revelatory in driving home the point that irrespective of caste or social standing violence against women is a common thread. However, as earlier, hard facts and details on the subject are missed out with no discussion/ debate on why this state of affairs exists. The relevant extract is reproduced.

An analysis of the practices of violence against women by caste would reveal that while the incidence of dowry deaths and violent controls and regulations on the mobility and sexuality by the family are frequent among the dominant upper castes- dalit women are more likely to face the collective and public threat of rape, sexual assault and physical violence at the workplace and in public.

Box 8.14

Source: Sharmila Rege "Dalit Women Talk Differently: A Critique of 'Difference' and Towards a Dalit Feminist Standpoint Position" in Maitrayee Chaudhuri ed. *Feminism in India* (p.211-223) (Women Unlimited/Kali Delhi 2004)

Fig 21 - Extract from Chapter 8 of standard 12, Social Change and development in India, NCERT

16. Analysis of the classes 11 and 12 Sociology textbooks reveal that while gender parity continues to be mentioned intermittently in the text, references to the prevalence of gender-based violence is minimal. Passing references to the issue are not likely to draw substantial attention to the subject which could lead to enhanced awareness. Admittedly, the examples quoted in snippets (as reproduced) are relevant, but there is follow up or description of the problem. However, it is recommended that the relevant portions be collated and be considered for inclusion in the material sought to be prepared. School textbooks provide an excellent opening and opportunity to discuss any topic which needs to be addressed. Topical issues such as global warming, democratic politics, religious differences, caste demographics, etc, which are considered important, find reflection in books. Similar importance must be accorded to the topic of gender-based violence by including in school syllabi, so that the problem can be addressed holistically.

What needs to be changed/ added to the syllabi?

17. References to gender inequality, stereotyping of women, denial of opportunities to women for education, work and equal wages, etc are undeniably regular throughout the narratives from class 6 to 10. Considering the regularity with which these topics appear in the text, it can be reasonably assumed that the issue of gender parity is kept alive through the academic sessions spread over the middle school years, for it to be substantially discussed. The examples, snippets, activities

and questions related to this topic are also well interspersed all through the text ensuring that the class is kept interested in the topic. It is also pertinent that the caste system, treatment of Dalits and to a large extent, religious discrimination, have also been dealt with reasonably adequately in the texts.

18. However, whilst gender parity topics have been dealt with adequately, little emphasis has been paid to the matter related to gender-based violence perpetrated against women. Violence committed against women – be it rape, molestation, harassment, dowry murders, acid attacks, honour killings, etc at home/ work/ place or public places - must be seen beyond the perspective of criminal/ civil offences and must be treated as social crimes/ ills.

19. Prudishness precluding discussion about gender violence? It needs to be examined why gender-based violence is not discussed in class whereas all other possible ills of Indian society are discussed openly. Possibly, a puritanical approach to matters related to sexual assault/ molestation or the shame associated with it, precludes frank discussion. While conservative approaches in such matters is a given in India, conversely, the lack of frank and objective discussion about violence against women has probably led the situation to deteriorate to the extent that it is. Unless a bolder approach is adopted, it is quite likely that the situation would remain unchanged, with little scope for improvement.

20. Need for exclusive treatment of gender-based issues It needs to be realized that gender-based violence in all its forms is a social evil as much as caste, untouchability, discrimination, etc and needs to be tackled similarly. Simply because it may be embarrassing to discuss, or there is uncertainty about if or how to approach the topic with students, should not mean that it be ignored. In the present scheme of layout of the text, various sub-topics are clubbed under a main chapter head. For

example, discrimination may cover aspects related to caste, gender, religion, economic disparity, etc. Given that the feminine gender comprises nearly half the population (both rural and urban) and that gender-based issues are not exclusive to either rural or urban women, an exclusive chapter itself (or a sub section) may be dedicated/ included to address women related issues alone. This exclusive treatment of the topic would allow various social issues related to women to be discussed exhaustively with the desired emphasis.

21. Topics for inclusion The gender-based inequality issues that have been introduced in the class 6 text book must not only be persisted with, but also consolidated by expanding their scope. Stereotyping of genders has been well introduced. More interactive exercises must be introduced to increase awareness. Once the concept of society initiating stereotyping is well understood, efforts must be made to explain how these stereotypes are false. A breakdown of the stereotype must also be attempted. Examples of successful women political leaders (like Indira Gandhi, Margaret Thatcher, Angela Merkel, Hillary Clinton), sportswomen (like Mary Kom, PT Usha, Karnam Malleshwari,, Jackie Joyner Kersie), social activists (like Kiran Bedi, Medha Patkar), industrialists and professionals (like Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Indra Nooyi), etc must be mentioned in the text and their achievements discussed. Students may be asked to identify women achievers (especially in conventional male bastions) to break the existing mindset.

22. As an inclusion to chapter 7, where the case study discusses apprehension/ fear felt by girls while walking back from school even as early as the 1960s, parallels must be drawn with similar situations prevailing in India even to this day. The topic may be developed along lines of why girls are perceived as easy 'prey' and why boys behave the way they do? Girls could be encouraged to narrate their fears about

stepping out alone out of fear of harassment, especially after dark. Sharing their experiences would help in encouraging others to share similar experiences, while sensitizing the male students of the changes in mindset boys need to bring about. The boys must be encouraged to introspect on the behaviour displayed by the males under these circumstances. The fact that this dread experienced by girls/ women cuts across both rural and urban areas must be emphasized to bring out the pan Indian nature of the problem. The fact that along with the sanitation aspects, the vulnerability of rural women who had to step out of their homes at odd hours in the dark to relieve themselves, was one of the main reasons for endorsing the Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural), must be brought out to the students. The topic must not be shied away from but be confronted head on. While facts and discussions may be unpleasant, they need to be brought to the fore to force a change. Reflection on the actions by a few men/ boys and how they affect women/ girls must be the underlying theme.

23. Another promising ‘opening’ for discussion that chapter 8 offers is the one related to domestic violence. The topic, as presented in the text, has not been developed to its full extent. It is a very real and topical problem in today’s age where live-in relationships along with conventional marriages are covered under the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act. This form of violence directed against women, arguably probably more than others, remains under reported given the privacy of the house in which it usually occurs, and the shame associated with it by the survivor. Mutual respect in a relationship needs to be understood by students. Data could be mentioned to indicate how commonly domestic violence occurs. The fact that domestic violence/ harassment could be both physical or psychological could be covered. Intricately linked to the crimes of domestic violence, are those of dowry murders (not deaths) and harassment (covered in brief in chapter 8). Fortunately,

compared to earlier decades, dowry related crimes are on the decline given the successful social drive launched against the malpractice by the government and social groups since the 1980s. However, as with all such issues, it must continue to be discussed in students' forum so that the impetus towards its eradication does not wane.

24. Addressing under-reporting of crimes by women Importantly, this episode could have been used to explain the general embarrassment/ shame perceived by women in coming forward to report crimes of such nature committed against them by family members, be they husbands, partners, brothers, uncles, etc. This peculiar trait of 'shame' felt by the survivor, results in many crimes remaining unreported with the perpetrators getting progressively emboldened, and often going scot free. Along with teaching young students about the need to report crimes without fear or shame, they must also be made aware of laws directed at reducing gender-based crimes. Efforts must be made to make students aware of the latest laws that have been enacted. For example, though acid attacks against young girls have been occurring with frightful regularity and are on the increase, there is no mention of this crime in the text. Moreover, no clause of the IPC covers this dastardly act. It was only through the introduction of section 326 A and B in the IPC that finally this act was recognized as separate crime from that causing grievous bodily harm. Facts such as these need to be covered at school.

25. Adverse child sex ratio in India Whilst the adverse child sex ratio has been covered over classes 6-10 and again in class 11 (Socology), the social implications have not been dwelt on adequately. The impact of having lesser number of females in the population, both for demographic reasons (effects on population growth, increased fertility ratios, poor maternal health, higher child mortality rates,

etc) and the need to maintain social balance, needs to be elaborated. It is a possibility that deprived of female companionship and company, could cause men to commit more crimes against women. Research on the psychological effects on men in communities where women are in lesser numbers, and possibly the formers' greater propensity to assault women physically would need to be undertaken to establish this possible scenario.

26. Inclusion of gender-based topics in class 9 syllabus As has been discussed, the social science coverage in this class is dedicated solely to aspects related to democracy. There is no mention of any gender-based disparity and the topic has been given an entire miss. The opportunity to impart value education to 14–15-year-olds must not be missed. It is proposed that a full chapter on revising gender biases introduced. It would build on the aspects covered in classes 6-8, not by repetition of what has been covered previously, but by discussing the opinion of the class on the subject, as they grew up and progressed from class 6 to 9. This is also the age when interest and attraction towards the opposite gender starts to pique. Young adolescents are keen to know about the other gender. Under the circumstances, it would serve the topic well to discuss physical attraction between boys and girls as a natural process of growing up and how these feeling can be handled, while respecting the physical/ emotional space of the other.

27. Trauma of stalking and eve teasing Along with the explanation for attraction towards the opposite gender while growing up, stalking or teasing of girls by boys/ men could be introduced. It could be explained how some men stalk and eve tease women in public, the workplace or even online, much to the chagrin and discomfort of the former. The inappropriateness of such behaviour needs to be expressed. The glorification of 'stalking/ pursuing' of heroines by heroes as depicted in some movies/

tv serials could be included in the discourse. Awareness that such trauma is commonly faced by women, possibly including the female family members of the boys in the class themselves, holds the trigger to change. It would serve the case even better if the young men/ boys follow up the discussion at school with enquiries at their homes with female family members so that a reality check is re-affirmed and such behaviour deterred. While it may appear bold to talk of such issues in class 9, it needs to be initiated if a change in mindset and sensitization of the boys is to come about with regard to how they think of, and treat women. If harassment and ill treatment of women has already been introduced in classes 6-8, this would just be a natural progression.

28. Like the content in the class 9 textbook, in the class 10 syllabus too, there is hardly any content related to gender bias issues, and none to gender-based violence. Once again, considering the age profile of students (15-16 year olds), it is recommended that general misconduct towards women and their harassment in public places and at work be discussed. Indecent and unacceptable behaviour by men towards women such as groping in buses/ trains, staring, making inappropriate gestures, using sexual innuendos in their presence and targeting them, using lewd language in their presence, etc must be discussed frankly. Provisions of the Vishakha guidelines (issued by the Supreme Court in 1997) and Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 must be covered with the students, not just the punitive actions that would follow in case of any misdemeanor, but also the reasons why they came into being. However, as a teaching point, the focus must remain on the eradication/ avoidance of such behaviour in entirety, rather than accepting the misconduct and pursuit of the legal recourse.

29. Universal compulsory value education across streams in secondary classes

Given the rate of violent and heinous crimes against women that make the news daily, it is surprising that no requirement has been the felt to sensitize young adults to this facet and try to force a change of mindset (especially of adolescent males) towards creating a more peaceful society/ environment for women. Conversations with students in class 11 and 12 in different schools reveals that absolutely no discussion is held at school on the aspect of gender-based violence. Apparently, the task of grooming adolescents to conduct themselves as responsible adults is left unattended by the school, to be taught either by family/ friends/ relatives, or to be 'learnt' on one's own! It is unfortunate that an outstanding opportunity to transform the mindset of a captive impressionable group is not exploited. It is opined that value education for secondary school students (both for classes 11 and 12) must be included as 'non-academic activity' compulsory subject. With various aspects of gender-based violence introduced in earlier classes (from 6-10), it is proposed that the more heinous crimes like rape/ molestation/ dowry murders/ kidnapping for trafficking, etc be included for discussion in secondary school classes. Data from the National Crime Record Bureau reflecting the pan-Indian malaise must be included to bring out the harsh realities. There should be little sugar coating of the scale of the problem so that it's severity is driven home. Harsh data is the only tool by which awareness and sensitization can be triggered. The benign/ sanitized approach to the manner in which gender-based violence against women is addressed, needs to be altered drastically. As long as the discussion is not lewd or threatening, all aspects of the problem must be revealed, especially its prevalence across the social panorama. The issues must not be shielded away from. Case studies (like the Nirbhaya case, Modi mills case, etc) and instances of the way girls/ women are harassed/ violently treated by male members of society/

family, need to be presented before the adolescents. Data on the occurrence of such violations available with National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) must be shared. The media is flush with news of this nature nearly daily. These every day, apparently common occurrences, to which people become inured and tend to gloss over, need to be woven into the classroom discussion. Only when the sensitization increases would these young adults realize the preponderance and the scale of the problem, and that something needs to be done about it. Given the topicality and relevance of the subject for the age of the students, it is opined that the issue would be mulled over amongst the students beyond the classroom in playgrounds, and even homes, with family members. It can be hoped that if not all, at least a few students would question errant/ deviant behaviour when confronted with it, or when witness to it and would interpose/ question the same.

30. Graded inclusion of data In order to ensure that the information and data shared with students is age appropriate, it is recommended that the content be graded from class 6 onwards till class 12. Whilst a general tendency to mistreat women may be presented in the junior classes, harsher facts may be included for discussion in secondary school lessons. More heinous crimes may be discussed only in later stages to avoid unnecessary and inappropriate questions from relatively younger students. Moreover, there is always the possibility that the discussion may become embarrassing/ risqué/ bawdy. To alleviate this possibility, it is recommended that the language of the text, the words used, case studies selected, activities, questions posed, etc be carefully calibrated and deliberated prior to finalization. Experienced teachers and psychologists must decide the content/ language for all classes for appropriateness of level of exposure to the topic.

31. Use of Media In developing the course content, it needs to be realized that the adolescents of today are millennials. The content must reflect the world they live in. For most, life without televisions, internet, Facebook, Instagram, etc is unfathomable. Appreciating this reality, optimum use needs to be made of the audio-visual benefits offered by the internet in addressing the problem. Movies like ‘Pink’ (2016- dealing with date rape and the right of a woman over her body) and ‘Thappad’ (dealing with domestic violence) must be integral to the syllabus. Playing the movie, followed by discussions, would serve to be complete lessons in themselves. These movies are topical and very Indian in their context. More such content from theatre, Hollywood, books etc could be identified for inclusion for the classes to be informative, interesting and thought provoking.

32. Discussion – The modality of teaching value education It is proposed that to optimally ‘reach out’ and ‘connect’ with the adolescents, a novel approach be adopted to teach value education. Prima facie, it is recommended that apart from introducing the basic topic (text) and related data, the teacher’s involvement must be minimal, and her/ his role restricted to that of a moderator. The focus in class should primarily be on discussions and encouraging students to share their opinions and experiences. The teacher should intervene minimally, only regulating the discussion to ensure that it does not digress, become risqué or too argumentative. A healthy debate, hopefully leading to a consensus, should be the aim of the exercise. The class format must enable students, especially the girls, to frankly share their experiences without fear of embarrassment or ridicule. The teaching of the subject should involve minimal reading and writing. Assignments/ class work/ homework etc should not be imposed to ensure that students are not overly burdened. At most, research (via internet/ print media/ books) may be suggested to the students to be undertaken on the

topic, prior to its discussion in class. It is opined that this approach will draw the students to the class and keep their interests piqued.

33. Assessment of value education Likely to be perceived as an additional 'burden' to add to their already heavy academic load, it is quite possible that students may be averse to accept value education classes. To address this aversion/ apprehension of the students, it is recommended that value education classes not be assessed in terms of marks. The only criteria applicable to these classes could be that their attendance by students must be compulsory, as that would serve the purpose adequately. While active participation by students in deliberations/ deliberations to questions posed/ solutions proposed to gender-based violence problems would be ideal, the purpose of spreading awareness would still be served even if a student did not speak up, but remained a passive listener to others. Hearing the issues being discussed in class, should be trigger enough to generate a 'manthan' (churning of views and counter views) in the mind of even the most passive student.

34. Periodicity for conduct of classes Periods for conduct of value education could be so planned that classes are held on those days when students are scheduled to attend school for other academic subjects as well. This dovetailing of value education with the other academic subjects would ensure that students are not required to attend school additionally in class 12, while they are busy preparing for the board/ competitive examinations. Additionally, if it can be arranged, these classes must be spread across the entire academic year rather than get over oa short period of time. This will ensure 'revisits' to the topic allowing perceptions to be changed as the students grow older and more aware. This protracted coverage of the topic over a longer period would allow the students to reflect on these topics better. At the end of

school, based on the students' presence in class, annotation as having 'Attended/ Not Attended' value education classes may be made in the CBSE/ board certificate.

12. Handling of the subject by teachers Undeniably, the topic being proposed for inclusion is unique, 'sensitive' and likely to generate animated discussions. Aspects of misogyny are quite likely to come up in discussions, not only by 'unaware' students, but also possibly by the 'insensitive' teacher/ moderator. Hence, it is absolutely essential that care needs to be taken to identify a teacher for this subject, who is sensitive, mature and who possibly finds 'acceptance' with students at large. Establishing a relationship is of the essence. While it is possible that not all schools will have such teachers, an attempt must be made, nevertheless. To this 'innate' sensitivity of the teacher, must be added training courses/ capsules conducted by NCERT/ CBSE/ NCW members/ experts from the field so that a common template for the pedagogical process is established and can be built on. Possibly, school counsellors may be used for this task where available, considering that they are trained in the field. A system of checks and balances in the form of observation classes, feedback from students, teachers and parents, individual interviews by counsellors, etc would need to be in place to monitor progress of the subject.

35. Use of external expertise Whilst NCERT, CBSE and National Curriculum Framework members would probably form the core team for such a revamp of the syllabi, considering the uniqueness of the subject under proposal and the fact that it would be introduced for the first time, it is recommended that extensive use of inputs by child psychologists, sociologists, experienced middle and senior schoolteachers, NCW members, experts from the police (handling such issues), experts from field projects/ NGOs, etc be made. Inputs must be invited from all stake holders under the Ministry of Women and Child development to identify suitable material, mode of

conduct, training schedule, etc. Most importantly, inputs must be sought from the Haryana government on the project conducted in their state on this issue (refer Dhar, Diva/Jain, Tarun/Jayachandran, Seema (Jul 17, 2020), Reshaping Adolescents' Gender Attitudes: Evidence from a School Based Experiment in India, AEARCT Registry AEARCTR-0000072), Northwestern University and Institute of Financial Management and Research). Preferably, the team members who undertook classes for the students in Haryana in the stated experiment must be invited to form part of the core team established for creating the content, so that their valuable experience can be utilized.

36. Guest Lectures Whilst it may appear far fetched for schools, it is recommended leading sociologists on women's issues, child psychologists, senior bureaucrats and police officials, members of NCW, experts on policy and women empowerment, leading feminists, successful public figures/ sportswomen / actors/ writers, etc conduct physical/ online lectures/ webinars on the subject of violence against women and equality for students of classes 11 and 12. The Covid 19 pandemic has proven to the world that it is easily possible. The potential must be harnessed. A panel of such experts may be drawn up who could speak to students at mutually convenient schedules, thereby allowing students to get a broader world view of the problem.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Considering the widespread violence perpetrated against women in today's age, in looking to initiate a change in the mindset of men, the observation by Gloria Steinem, the famous American feminist "We've begun to raise daughters more like sons... but few have the courage to raise our sons more like our daughters", is telling. A similar observation about the shortcoming of the education system is made by Gomersall (1994, pp246); 'In short, while girls must be educated in the skills and attitudes to achieve an academic equality with boys – and to challenge inequalities within the labour market – the education of boys in the skills and attitudes to address their equal responsibilities within the family are of equal if not greater importance. And this is where the formal equality accorded by the National Curriculum is most lacking, in the 'masculisation' of the schooling of girls with no corresponding 'feminisation' of the schooling of boys.'
2. While the observations above may appear to relate to gender parity/ equality, the undertone emphasizes the need to have men empathise more with women. This empathy can only be brought about by enhanced awareness about the challenges faced by women in all walks of life. School, along with the home and family, is arguably the institution most suited to bring about this gradual progress. With the change in the education system being brought about by the implementation of NEP 2020, an ideal opportunity has presented itself for the purpose. This is an opportunity to plug the lacuna in the NCERT school syllabi, which does not adequately increase awareness of adolescents/ young adults to the malaise of violence directed against

women in its myriad forms, thereby not encouraging mutual respect between the genders to the extent possible.

Recommendations

3. To bring about a mindset change amongst young boys/adolescents to stem the trend of crimes against women, it is recommended that students be targeted while at school using a two-pronged approach of undertaking value education and including related topics in the syllabi. The following broad-based steps are recommended to be taken.

a. Inclusion of Value Education as a subject Value education must be introduced in middle school and senior secondary classes. The focus of these classes must be on building character of the students. These classes must not focus as much on ‘classic teaching’ by teacher to students, but instead facilitate free-wheeling discussions between teacher-students and amongst students themselves, especially in senior classes. The classroom must facilitate unencumbered exchange of ideas with the aim of the two main genders getting an opportunity to know, and respect, each other.

b. Inclusion of gender-based violence topics in textbooks The school syllabi may be revised to include topics on gender-based violence against women. Current gender parity/ equality topics in the syllabi must be reinforced and added to. An overview of the various forms in which violence/ harassment against women (like rape, molestation, eve teasing, groping, acid attacks, using of lewd language/ gestures, stalking, etc) are perpetrated must be included to explain this malaise in society.

c. Use of data in textbooks The extent/ scale of the problem must be explained by using data available from official sources such as NCRB. This

stark presentation of the frequency of violent crimes against women would serve to draw attention of the students to the issue under and drive home the need to address it on priority. The official source will also ensure that data is not questioned and sensationalized.

d. Novelty of only discussions; no lectures/ work subject! To avoid making the students averse to an 'added' subject in secondary school, there should not be any homework/ classwork/ project/ assignment related to the topic. Discussing the topics freely and frankly in response to the questions/ issues posed by the teacher, should remain the focus of the effort. Similarly, no test/ marks, but simple mandatory attendance of classes, should suffice for the student to be deemed 'passed' in the subject.

e. Selection/ training of suitable teachers Selection of suitably sensitive/mature teachers to conduct these classes, and their training for the task, will need careful thought. As the topic has the potential to get derailed in the classroom if not prudently handled, this aspect will have to be carefully planned.

f. Rated complexity of subject matter Graded accruements to the syllabi must be made from classes 6 to 12, keeping in mind the mental development and innocence of the students at each stage. Extensive use of experts must be made to make the classroom exercises effective.

g. External help Inputs of all stakeholders viz Min of Women and Child Development, NCW, National Curriculum Framework, NCERT, CBSE, child psychologists, sociologists, field experts, experts from NGOs, etc may be sought while formulating the syllabi given the sensitivity of the topic, so that all pedagogical aspects are comprehensively considered.

h. Integrating system experts in the exercise It is also strongly recommended that inputs be sought from the Haryana government on the experiment conducted with middle school students towards 'Reshaping Adolescents' Gender Attitudes' (report submitted in July 2020). Considering that it is possibly the only formal, peer reviewed experiment of its type conducted in India which met with reasonable success, its findings and modalities cannot be overstated. It becomes more attractive considering its recency, and the fact that it was conducted in Haryana, a state which has one of the worst child sex ratios in the country. If feasible, members of the experimental team must form part of any advisory group/ team made for this syllabi revamp exercise.

4. For any educational system to be considered successful, outputs at the end of school years must be the benchmark against which the efficacy of the system must be measured. While it is undeniable that the present social studies syllabi is quite exhaustive in terms of preparing young adults to face the world with all its social and political complexities, more dimensions could be added to their personalities by making them, especially the males, more empathetic and respectful towards the females. In the absence of adequate exposure in the school textbooks to issues related to gender-based violence, it is opined that school education falls short of producing a well-rounded sensitive adult. Considering the state of atrocities against women, Indian society can ill afford this shortcoming.

References

1. Banerjee, N., & Poulomi Roy. (2004). What Does the State Do for Indian Women? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39(44), 4831-4837. Retrieved March 22, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4415743>
2. B. Ratna Kumari. (2001). Work and Gender: A European Perspective. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36(38), 3603-3605. Retrieved March 22, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4411137>
3. Bhog, Dipta. (2002, Apr 27). Gender and Curriculum. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37(17), 1638-1642. Retrieved March 22, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/https://www.epw.in/journal/2002/17/review-womens-studies-review-issues-specials/gender-and-curriculum.html>
4. CBSE. (2014). *CBSE Statistical Information*. cbse.gov.in. <https://www.cbse.gov.in/newsite/statisticalInformation.html> (accessed 17 Feb 21)
5. Cole, M. (2006). *Education, Equality and Human Rights: Issues of Gender, "Race", Sexuality, Disability and Social Class*. Routledge.
6. Dhar, D., Jain, T., & Jayachandran, S. (2018). *Reshaping adolescents' gender attitudes: Evidence from a school-based experiment in India* (No. w25331). National Bureau of Economic Research.
7. Evertsson, M. (2006). The reproduction of gender: housework and attitudes towards gender equality in the home among Swedish boys and girls. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 57(3), 415–436. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-4446.2006.00118.x>

8. *Gender Sensitization School Curriculum.* (2020). indianyouth.net. <http://www.indianyouth.net/gender-sensitization-school-curriculum> (accessed 24 Feb 21)
9. Ghansham, D. (2002, July 3–7). *Female Foeticide and the Dowry System in India* [Paper presentation]. Townsville International Women’s Conference, Townsville, Australia.
10. Gure, G. S. (2016). Gender Sensitisation: Significance of Education. *International Education & Research Journal*, 2(12), <http://ierj.in/journal/index.php/ierj/article/view/609>
12. India CSR Network. (2019, July 19). *NCERT to promote gender sensitisation through their school curriculum.* <https://indiacsr.in/ncert-to-promote-gender-sensitisation-through-their-school-curriculum/> (accessed 16 Feb 21)
13. *India sex ratio 2020 - StatisticsTimes.com.* (2021, January). Statisticstimes.Com. <https://statisticstimes.com/demographics/country/india-sex-ratio.php> (accessed 23 Feb 21)
14. Iyengar, R. G. (2016). Gender Sensitization in Education : A pathway to Women Empowerment. *International Journal of Recent Trends in Engineering & Research- Special Edition, November*, https://www.ijrter.com/published_special_issues/30-11-2016/gender-sensitization-in-education-a-pathway-to-women-empowerment.pdf
15. Mehra, P. (2017, December 15). Nudge the mind out of its bias. *The Hindu: Business Line.* <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/specials/nudge-the-mind-out-of-its-bias/article9994662.ece> (accessed 19 Feb 21)
16. Misra, S and Arora, JC (1982) Bureau of Police Research and Development. *A Study On Crime Against Women*

17. NCERT. (n.d.). *NCERT Syllabus*. NCERT.nic.in.
<https://ncert.nic.in/syllabus.php> (accessed 25 Feb 21)
18. NCERT. (2006). *NCERT Sociology Grade 11, 12*. NCERT. (accessed 25 Feb 21)
19. NCERT Social Science, *Grade 6–10*. (2007). NCERT.
20. Press Trust of India. (2019, November 19). *Need to extend gender sensitisation programmes to all schools across India: Smriti Irani*. India Today.
<https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/news/story/need-to-extend-gender-sensitisation-programmes-to-all-schools-across-india-smriti-irani-1620420-2019-11-19> (accessed 27 Feb 21)
21. Rajshree. (2016). Gender Sensitization: Equality of Opportunity in Indian Context. *Indian Journal of Research*, 5(10), 1. <https://doi.org/10.36106/paripex>
22. Roy, M. (2017). Gender sensitization a pillar to sustainable development. *International Journal of Current Research*, 9(9), 1–5.
<https://www.journalcra.com/sites/default/files/issue-pdf/25247.pdf>
23. Saini, A. (2017). *Inferior: How Science Got Women Wrong-and the New Research That's Rewriting the Story* (Reprint ed.). Harper Collins.
24. Sharma, S. (2016, December 1). *Achieving Gender Equality in India: What Works, and What Doesn't* - United Nations University. United Nations University.
<https://unu.edu/publications/articles/achieving-gender-equality-in-india-what-works-and-what-doesnt.html>
25. Walikhanna, C. (2013, March). *Report of Expert Committee on Gender and Education*. National Commission for Women.
http://ncwapps.nic.in/pdfreports/report_of_expert_committee_gender_and_education.pdf

