

What About Our Boys? Educating Boys for Gender Justice



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with The Prerna Boys, Anshu Jain & Anand Chitravanshi

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About the Authors

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She has a masters and PhD in education from the Graduate School of Education at UC Berkeley. She has presented academic papers at many national and international forums and universities, including Columbia, NYU, Chicago, and Berkeley, and has given keynote addresses at international drama and education conferences in Edinburgh, Jamaica, Plymouth, Toronto, Northern Ireland, and New York. She has published extensively on critical pedagogy, theatre in education, feminist pedagogy, child cultures, and girls' education and empowerment. Her current research focuses on developing and scaling her Girls' Empowerment Program in India with the help of curricular reform, teacher training, and affordable technology. Her latest book—*Reaching for the Sky: Empowering Girls Through Education*—draws on her 14 years of work with Perna Girls School, and argues that education can be truly transformative if it addresses the everyday reality of girls' lives and responds to their special needs and challenges with respect and care.

Anand Chitravanshi is the director of outreach programs at Study Hall Educational Foundation (SHEF), overseeing three education-based initiatives across northern India. One of few male advocates for women's rights in India, Anand's work includes scaling SHEF's rights-based, critical feminist pedagogy to government-run girls' schools, using technology to popularize SHEF's quality pedagogical practices, and establishing community transformation centers to enroll out-of-school children in schools. Anand was Urvashi Sahni's research associate during the development of the Boy's Curriculum and is part of the core team that is scaling it in government schools.

Anshu Jain worked at SHEF as Urvashi Sahni's research associate for three years and is currently a teaching fellow at Asoka University, Delhi, in the Economic department. His research interests include thinking about children's meanings of care and belonging in educational settings, and identifies most closely with his experiences as a school teacher and education researcher.

A Word to the Readers/Preface

The conceptual framework and draft curriculum presented here have emerged from my ongoing work in Prerna Boys School in Lucknow, India. The school, started in 2009, is a relatively new endeavour by SHEF,¹ a nonprofit founded more than three decades ago. The purpose of this document is to share our best practices and their theoretical underpinnings as we worked at helping boys understand gender equality and to reframe their notions of masculinity and manhood—or perhaps more appropriately, boyhood. We share the growing perception that addressing boys’ attitudes is an important part of achieving gender equality. We further believe that lessons on equality are best taught to girls and boys when they are young and that school is the right place to deliver these lessons. We also believe that lessons in equality are as important as lessons in language, math, and science and should be included in the official curriculum. School education can be a powerful transformative force, provided we transform what we teach and how we teach it.

This document is useful for those working toward gender equality in and through education, including policymakers, educators, teachers, and administrators. It is also relevant to people engaged in working for girls’ rights to safety, education, and autonomy. Although this document presents work done with boys, it can support and contribute to the effort of the thousands of concerned men and women who are working to create a safer, more hospitable, and happier world for girls and women.

The curriculum is a work-in-progress, based on the work we did with boys aged 13–17, in Uttar Pradesh (UP), India from 2016-2017. It is more of a general guide and framework than a step-by-step instruction manual for teachers. It includes a set of lesson plans that we developed alongside the boys. Though the context is Indian and many of the discussions are specific to India, the general ideas can be easily adapted by teachers to other country contexts as well.

Lastly, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the support provided by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, without which the publication of this manuscript would not have been possible.

With best wishes,

Urvashi Sahni

¹SHEF currently runs three K-12 schools, catering to rural children, working-class girls and boys, and upper middle-class children. Through its many programs, SHEF addresses the needs of out-of-school children, as well as children with special needs. In collaboration with the state governments of UP and Rajasthan, SHEF works with more than 900 government schools through teacher training programs. For more on SHEF, see the last section of this document.

The Site and Methodology

This framework and curriculum for educating boys for gender justice has emerged from 18 months of critical dialogues with the boys of Prerna Boys School in Lucknow, along with some lessons and ideas borrowed from other sources, including my own work with Prerna girls.²

The School was established in July 2009 as a primary school—Pre-K to 5 classes—that we expanded to high school in 2015. The classes are conducted in the afternoon and the student population consists of working-class boys from low-income families, many of whom work in the morning. This initiative was undertaken in response to the demand of the parents of the Prerna Girls School for a quality education for their boys.³

We were also motivated by the belief that in order to achieve a gender-just society, boys and girls both must receive an education that teaches them to critically examine the construction of gender in patriarchal societies. This means that boys, too, must learn to fight, resist, and end sexist oppression in the same way as girls. Boys must also learn how to deconstruct a patriarchal conception of masculinity and reconstruct an egalitarian one in its place.

In a hierarchical patriarchal society like India, it is difficult to understand and conceptualize the idea of equality. It is particularly hard for boys given that they are raised with a sense of entitlement, superiority, and privilege. Regardless of the class, caste, or religion they belong to, boys always enjoy a preferred status over their female counterparts. Changing these conceptual frameworks involves a paradigm shift, almost Copernican in nature. School can be a very good place to reframe boys' worldview by challenging and transcending their perception of masculinity and other firmly entrenched notions of caste, gender, and class.

With these motivations, Prerna Boys School was founded not only to provide boys with a quality education, but one *with a strong critical feminist perspective*. Along the same lines as our girls' school, we adopted the following educational goals for the boys' school.⁴

Our boys must:

- Learn to read, write, and successfully complete the government-mandated syllabus up to class 12.
- Develop a sense of agency and control over their lives, aspirations for a future, and the confidence and skills to realize it.

²Center for Health and Social Justice, *Sensitive Man Responsible Citizen: A Training Manual for work with Men on Gender Equality and Leadership Development* (New Delhi); Bell Hooks, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love* (New York: Atria Books, 2004); Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (Oxford University Press, 1986); Nivedita Menon, *Seeing like a feminist* (London: Penguin, 2012).

³I have talked about Prerna Girls School in greater detail in - Sahni, *Reaching for the Sky: Empowering Girls Through Education* (Brookings Institution Press, 2017).

⁴See Epilogue, Sahni, *Reaching for the Sky*.

- Learn to recognize girls as equal persons with boys.
- Develop a critical understanding of patriarchal social and political structures that frame their lives.
- Develop a critical feminist consciousness.

Currently Prerna Boys School has 150 students (90 primary and 60 senior) being cared for by nine teachers (three male and six female). The boys in the school range from age 4 – 19, and 39 percent of the boys are brothers of Prerna girls, while 61 percent are from other families. All are poor with an average family income of approximately Rs.9000 (\$135) and an average family size of 5.6 members. 67 percent belong to the historically disadvantaged Other Backward Castes and Scheduled Castes. 26 percent of the boys are either working or have worked before at some point. Five of our students are boys who are runaways now sheltered by an organization called Ehsaas, which rescues boys from the streets. 41 percent of fathers and 62.8 percent of mothers are illiterate. 12.3 percent of boys either have a single parent or are orphans.

In the beginning of 2016, a year after we opened the secondary school section at Prerna Boys School, we began engaging in critical dialogues with the senior boys. The dialogues, developed through our work with the Prerna Girls School, are part of the official Prerna Boys' School curriculum, taught alongside and often embedded in the typical subjects of language, math, and science. The school follows a critical feminist pedagogy, and the teachers engage in critical dialogues with the students regularly on issues that impact the lives of the students, their families, and others in their neighborhood, such as, poverty, caste, domestic violence, alcoholism, sexual harassment on streets, and so on. These critical dialogues are conducted by the teachers once every week, mostly in parallel to but sometimes together with, the girls at Prerna Girls School, which is housed in another building close by. The boys' school is segregated from the girls' school in response to the parent community's concern for the safety of their daughters. As many of our girls come from families who do not care for their education, having a co-ed space would further harm the Foundation's commitment toward girls' education and empowerment by constructing another barrier. However, the boys and girls meet regularly for critical dialogues, sports, drama, music, and so on. This mixed sex interaction is encouraged with the motive of helping boys and girls gain a better understanding of each other, to become friends, and to learn to negotiate relationships across gender in a safe, mediated setting. We have also limited the numbers in our boys' school deliberately, because we would like to use our limited resources for girls. We might consider further building the two schools in the future, if resources and parent community permits.

Prerna Boys School follows the same ethic of care that characterizes all of SHEF schools, and is governed by the same holistic, locally contextualized pedagogy and philosophy as Prerna Girls School. That is, the school focuses on boys' lives in a caring, responsive, and respectful environment and has the goal of achieving a better life and learning outcomes. Of course, the goal is for boys to gain academic knowledge and skills, but perhaps even more importantly, they should gain the knowledge and skills needed to live empowered lives as equal, autonomous persons.

Methodology: I, along with my associate researchers, Anand Chitravanshi and Anshu Jain, conducted critical dialogue classes with a group of boys over a period of 18 months on a variety of topics with the intent to develop an additional set of lesson plans unique for the boys. The goal was to engage with boys and see how they (men and boys) understand gender differences, work with them to understand their responses and reactions, and to build a draft curriculum based on the emergent learnings. We aim to figure out the “how and why” of what works with the boys. I deliberately engaged Anand, a young man, as I believe that boys might respond differently and perhaps with greater ease with another man. However, I found it advantageous that among the three, two of us were women, which helped build an empathetic understanding from our shared female experiences.

The participant group comprised of 15 boys with an age range of 13 to 17 years, school grades ranging from 7 to 10 and social profiles representative of the students described above. This mixed group of boys were selected to include perspectives of boys at different stages in their adolescent lives and to understand the group dynamics among boys of different ages.

The dialogues spanned a wide spectrum, ranging from dialogues aimed at facilitating boys’ greater self- and socio-emotional awareness, to topics of masculinity, violence against women at home and outside, gender, and marriage.

The dialogues lasted 60-90 minutes and the format was relatively informal. We audiotaped all the discussions in a safe space and used parts of the transcripts in the lesson plans to illustrate how discussions might progress. We began by videotaping the discussions but found that to be too intrusive and inhibiting and switched to audiotaping. We explained to the boys why we were recording the discussions, and they felt very important to be contributing to, what one boy described as, “important research.” Everyone sat in a circle and talked. Boys were encouraged to share stories from their own lives, and the teachers shared their own experiences, as well. We also used drama, as we believe it is a very powerful medium to help in the expression and the education of feelings. Boys were encouraged to share their discussions outside of the classroom with the girls and women in their families, i.e., sisters, mothers, sisters-in-law, and cousins. Throughout the discussions, the teachers encouraged the boys to realize how the current social structure and resulting norms and mindsets were unfair and cruel, and to think of ways in which they might contribute to changing them.

At the end of the project, the boys were engaged in a focus group discussion to understand the impact of the classes on their perceptions and understanding. The teachers were also engaged in a focus group discussion to reflect upon the process and to get their analytical feedback on the curriculum and how they believed it had impacted the students. Another focus group discussion was conducted with the parents to elicit their responses to their boys’ gender classes.

Outlined below are a few lessons we learned in the process, as well as the challenges of working with boys on gender, and our tentative solutions.

1. It was much harder to get the boys to talk about themselves than it was with the girls, as it became clear how they were not used to talking about their feelings at all.

2. Boys were much more reluctant to engage in activities like drama initially, though once the ice was broken, they engaged most enthusiastically.
3. We also found boys relatively less collaborative and more competitive than girls, which made it more difficult to build a “brotherhood” in the class. It was relatively easier to do this with the girls.
4. Boys adopted a very defensive approach in the beginning but began to thaw when they realized that group discussions were as much about helping them have better lives as it was for girls. We realized soon that we had to move away from talking only about girls and let them see that we cared about boys just as much. As Anshu said, “I was able to get rid of much of the resistance and defensive statements once I was able to convince them that I was in class because I wanted their life to get better, and not because I wanted only girls' lives to get better! We had to communicate very clearly and directly. After that there was a noticeable change in their behavior in classroom and outside.”
5. Co-ed dialogues were not always easy or productive. We had a couple of dialogues with the girls, but they ended up become polarized—a boys versus girls situation—with boys and girls on opposite sides of the discussions. We decided to engage in these dialogues sparingly with careful mediation. However, we did have a joint drama performance, joint concert, and street play, in which all participated much more collaboratively. These were very useful activities, and the boys emerged much more sensitized to issues related to sexist oppression.
6. Boys resisted sexist oppression of girls, though that was more on an individual level than general level. There were one or two boys who made it a point to adopt a contrarian approach, for example, pointing out that girls are at fault: They invite sexual harassment on the streets and act violently like boys. Additionally, they believe boys are equally oppressed.
7. During the development of the curriculum, the teachers adopted a flexible, responsive, self-reflexive approach, changing strategies to overcome the challenges that arose. For example, while we remained open to not discussing gender at every session, if the boys seemed particularly disengaged, we switched gears, and allowed boys the option to decide what they wanted to discuss. We used these discussions as opportunities to raise boys' awareness of how a gender-discriminatory society influences their lives adversely too.

Conceptual and Ethical Guide

This section describes the theoretical and ethical ideas that guided our pedagogy and the development of the curriculum. They undergirded the development of our lessons and directed our discussions with the boys. We share it here, with the hope that it might provide similar directions to people engaged in similar work in diverse contexts, different from ours. We believe that while the specific problems might vary in different contexts, the larger issues are the same in all patriarchal societies.

An Ethic of Responsive Care

"I came here to study...I want to study so that I can become something in the future" – Vishal, Grade 9

Vishal had run away from home as a very young boy. Consequently, he started his education late, and he now lives in an orphanage run by an NGO.

"I can become something . . . so that my mother does not have to work" – Ujjwal, Grade 8

Ujjwal, works in his father's tea stall at a street corner. He became solely responsible for the stall after his father died. His father was an alcoholic. He feels guilty for not being able to contribute to his family's income and because he cannot help his mother support the family, as much as he would like to.

"For how long will my mother bear all the expenses? Although I pay the fee on my own, still, I want to become something [in the future], so that we can have a house. . ." – Rahul, Grade 7

Rahul lives with his two younger sisters and mother who supports all three of them. He feels that he has to be responsible for his younger sisters, and should do more to support his mother.

Adolescent boys (and girls) from poor families have complex lives. Unlike boys from upper class families or from developed contexts, for our boys in this study, the urgencies of survival, i.e., practical matters of earning a livelihood and helping to support the family, are part of the natural travails of adolescence. Their desires include making their families' lives better along with their own. They all want to become 'something' in their lives—actors, cricketers, doctors, computer trainers, police officers, soldiers in the army. They want to grow up and take care of their families, have enough money for their sisters' marriages, and provide for their parents in their old age. Our boys come from poor neighborhoods where they witness violence at home and in their neighborhoods. Many of them work and find themselves at the mercy of the anger and tyranny of their employers who often scold and beat them. Our boys come to school because they believe that education will make their lives better. Their families believe that their sons' education is the doorway to economic progress and a better life for all of them.

We realized very early in our work with the boys that they must have faith that their school and teachers are committed to helping them make their lives better and equipping them to become 'something.' This was indeed our purpose, but more importantly, we saw our task as helping our boys define a better life in a non-sexist and egalitarian manner. For us, boys' desired life-outcome is they become autonomous persons who can take care of themselves and their families, and not just simply provide for them. Our goal is to help our boys perceive themselves not just as financial providers but

also as nurturers of their families—their wives, daughters, sons, sisters, and brothers. We found that while boys did care immensely about their mothers' and sisters' well-being, their perception of this was limited to earning more, bringing in more goods, and protecting their mothers and sisters. In turn, this was limited to placing curfews on their movements outside the house, not allowing them to go anywhere alone. Boys perceived this as the singular way in which a man can care for his family. Boys as young as fourteen expressed concerns about the future marriage expenses for their younger sister(s). Our goal then became to help them define non-sexist and non-patriarchal ways of caring. We helped them understand that fighting for their younger sister's education and supporting her desire to learn was probably a better way to care for her, so that she could become an independent person capable of taking her own decisions about life and marriage. Moreover, sharing responsibility for domestic chores so that she can also go out and play would be another way of caring for her.

The school is based on an ethic of care so that boys develop caring, nurturing dispositions. The pedagogy is contextualized in boys' lives, and teachers adopt a sympathetic responsive listening stance, so that boys feel heard and understood. The teachers let the boys see that they understand the compulsions of their lives, the ways in which they feel oppressed and burdened by poverty and the resulting child labor. Boys are given the curricular space to discuss their fears, anxieties, dreams, and hopes. At the same time, they see that as hard as their lives are, their sisters' lives are still harder. Society still gives them a preferred status, and boys still have greater privileges and advantages.

Without making them feel guilty for the discrimination against girls, we focused on teaching boys about gender and sexist oppression, i.e., oppression based on belonging to a particular sex. Girls are oppressed solely because they are girls. Patriarchy is not boys' fault, but it does give them more advantages and power over girls. They get more food, more education, more money, and more freedom. We help them explore the idea that their entitlements might also be their burdens. Our aim is to teach them that if they grow up as aware 'feminist' human beings, their lives would be better and the lives of women and girls' would get better as a result. Boys are shown how democracy subsumes feminism because they both are based on the idea of equality. The goal of the teacher is to lead boys to care about their own lives and futures, to understand their world with a critical lens, engaging in a critical examination of their social and political circumstances and becoming aware of the structural injustice and violence against women. Boys are encouraged to care about others in their world, to develop an empathetic understanding of the girls and women in their lives, and to care enough to challenge the social structure and traditional gendered social norms and mindsets. They not only experience care, but also learn to be caring.

We have learned that care is empowering. The key ways in which care manifests itself is through trust, respect, and attentiveness. Teachers must pay attention to the realities of the boys' lives, earn their trust, respond respectfully, and inculcate them with the belief that their teachers care deeply about them, and that they will do everything they can to help the boys build better lives. This is grounded in the belief that it is only when we are cared for that we learn to care. Boys must experience a different way of being treated and perceived if they are to learn to change their own perceptions of what it means to be a boy.

Schools as safe spaces and sanctuaries

Vishal, who ran away from home as a young boy, narrated: *"I ran away [from home] because my father used to beat me for no reason! He never sent us to school; neither my sister nor my brother is literate. Both my parents are also illiterate. We had nothing to do so I used to play here and there near our house with my friend. Whenever my father saw me playing, he used to come immediately, chase me inside the house and beat me. Then I just ran away."*

Roshan told us in response to the question "why he had come to Prerna:" *"My teacher in the previous school used to beat me even if I was a little late; she used to punish and tell me to stand and raise my arms under the sun. I was beaten with a really thick rod if I didn't know the answer to any question."*

Shubham amusedly talked about his previous school, mentioning, *"Back in that school I used to beat everyone up. Suppose if I asked someone to give me something and he didn't, I would beat him."*

"Little boys are the only males in our culture who are allowed to be fully, wholly in touch with their feelings, allowed moments when they can express without shame their desire to love and be loved. If they are very lucky, they are able to remain connected to their inner selves or some part of their inner selves before they enter a patriarchal school system where rigid sex roles will be enforced by peers as rigorously as they are in any adult male prison." Bell Hooks⁵

Boys, especially from working-class backgrounds, are witnesses, victims, and perpetrators of violence, often from a very young age. Many of our boys had abusive fathers and witnessed their mothers verbally and physically abused by them. Often, the boys also narrated incidents where they were brutally beaten in their previous schools. Public schools that cater to working-class children can be uncaring and violent places for young boys. Boys' schools have particularly violent school cultures. Many of the boys have been beaten and punished by teachers in their previous schools and frequently engaged in bullying less powerful peers and younger boys, as Shubham mentioned. Violence had become a way of life – in homes, in schools, on the streets. In our society, boys learn very early that being violent is a way to gain respect and power, especially for boys. Society often sends this message by being violent toward them.

Bell Hooks in "The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love" points toward a deeply rooted problem in patriarchy that, "boys are not seen as lovable in patriarchal cultures."⁶ Patriarchy values boys, but only for the responsibility to earn and be the providers for family. Very early, boys learn that they will

⁵Bell Hooks, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity and Love* (New York: Atria Books, 2004), p. 42.

⁶Ibid. p. 35.

be respected only if they conform to the norms of hegemonic masculinity, i.e., they must earn, they must wield control and they must hide their feelings. Very soon after establishing Prerna Boys School, we realized that our boys needed to know that they are indeed lovable. It was important that we did not replicate the patriarchal school cultures that Hooks warns can harm boys by enforcing rigid sex roles. As such, during the critical dialogue sessions with the boys, we worked to help them make a critical connection to their emotions and feelings. Boys, who are generally not expected to think about their feelings, took much time and hesitated to open up when the space was created for them.

We conceptualized our boys' school on the very same lines as the Prerna Girls School. Both schools are seen and conceived as spaces that serve to provide sanctuaries and safe spaces for our students, providing them a safety net in which they can learn to create an empowered self. In the boys' school, we recruited as many male teachers as possible, all of whom were gentle and caring men who would enable our boys to realize that an alternative form of masculinity was possible and they might learn not to follow and adhere to the hegemonic norms of toxic masculinity.

As Bell Hooks states, "Without a positive connection to a real adult man, boys are far more likely to invest in a hyper-masculine patriarchal ideal."⁷ Echoing our own understanding, Hooks says, "To truly protect and honor the emotional lives of boys, we must challenge patriarchal culture. And until that culture changes, we must create the subcultures, the sanctuaries where boys can learn to be who they are uniquely, without being forced to conform to patriarchal masculine visions."⁸ Schools can be these subcultures and sanctuaries for young boys. The teachers and school culture should support boys in perceiving themselves as lovable with the ability and legitimacy of expressing love. Schools should be constructed as safe caring spaces where boys learn to be self-aware emotionally and become autonomous human beings who consider themselves worthy of love and respect. Furthermore, schools should help boys learn to define their self-worth as boys and men independently from their ability to dominate others, or their ability to provide for others financially. This will thereby help them to imagine alternate conceptions of masculinity and ways of inhabiting the world as boys and men. Schools should be caring, nurturing spaces where boys are listened to respectfully and responsively, and where they are received as persons of value, deserving respect. Countering violent patriarchal school cultures is an important prerequisite and it is only in such an environment that boys can be educated for gender justice. Just as schools reproduce gendered norms for girls, they do the same for boys. So school cultures must become more democratic and caring.

Boys as equal persons

Boys must understand what being an 'equal' person entails. That being an equal person implies, by definition, recognizing others as equal. For an equation to be equal, it is necessary that both sides have equal numbers. Boys must understand that if they want to be equal persons then they must grant the same equality to others, and in this case, to girls. It is important to discuss the concept of equality at length with boys (and girls). Using the concept of democracy, citizenship, and the

⁷Ibid. p. 49.

⁸Ibid. p. 54.

constitution is a useful way to provide it with solid backing, especially while using it to counter social, religious, and cultural narratives.

The Indian Constitution, like the constitution of all democratic countries, puts equality as one of its main foundational pillars. In its preamble, it states, “Equality is a fundamental right and being equal and respecting the equality of other citizens is an essential part of what it means to be a citizen.”⁹ The idea of citizenship, in a democratic country has been very useful in helping our boys understand equality. It lends legitimacy to the principle of equality. The logic we have found effective is as follows: “We are all citizens of India, which is a democracy with a constitution that guarantees equality as a fundamental right to *all* her citizens. As citizens we have the right to equality and the responsibility not to violate others’ right, also the duty to uphold the constitution even when it goes against our tradition, our religion, and other social norms.” The idea of citizenship provides schools with constitutional legitimacy and a sound reason for questioning the social norms that have so far framed boys’ lives. The citizenship argument provides schools with constitutional authority based on solid democratic values and principles, enshrined in the constitution, and not just the school pushing its own ideology or opinion. Invoking democracy and the constitution also helps boys understand that patriarchy, because it is based on an unequal, hierarchical distribution of power, is antithetical to democracy and should have no place in democratic countries.

Furthermore, boys must be empowered to challenge all forms of social inequality, in order to live their own lives as equal persons. Here again, the argument from citizenship is very valuable. Constructing an identity as a citizen transcends narrow identities constructed by religion, caste, and gender. It is important to deal with the many ways in which inequality manifests itself socially, in terms of class and caste, or as Bell Hooks calls it “multiple patriarchies.” Boys must feel free to explore how they themselves feel unequal to other boys (and girls), because of their class and caste. These discussions must also find a legitimate space in the curriculum. It helps boys understand gender inequality in the context of a more general understanding of equality. This understanding has the added advantage of helping them empathize with girls who feel unequal and disadvantaged.

Raising Feminist Consciousness in Boys

Developing a feminist consciousness among boys is one of our primary educational goals at Prerna. Historian Gerda Lerner, in *The Creation of Patriarchy*, suggests that the development of feminist consciousness includes an awareness of a wrong, growth of a sense of sisterhood, autonomous definition by women of both their goals and strategies for changing their condition, and formulation of an alternative vision for the future.¹⁰ The definition, intended originally by Lerner to apply to women, serves as our guiding principle for teaching adolescent boys, as well. We see “awareness of a wrong”¹¹ as the first step that boys need to take, in the safe space of a classroom, in order to learn to *see as a feminist*.¹² Nivedita Menon, in her book mentions, “It is not only women who can adopt

⁹The Constitution of India, *Preamble* (1950).

¹⁰Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 241.

¹¹*ibid.* p. 242.

¹²Nivedita Menon, *Seeing like a feminist* (London: Penguin, 2012).

feminism as a way of life, but men who choose to do this have to take a stand against the privileges that they could otherwise take for granted.”¹³

Enabling boys to name and recognize their patriarchal privilege as something ‘wrong’ is a crucial starting point in educating boys to strive for a “gender just” world. It is precisely this recognition of a structural, all-pervasive injustice happening to women and girls, and their own corresponding gendered privileges that serves to enable boys to imagine egalitarian ways of inhabiting the society. Abhijit Das of Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ), India, at the Inaugural of the 2nd MenEngage Global Symposium in 2014 expressed this sentiment very clearly stating, “We need men and boys to reflect on their patriarchal privileges and join as allies in this common quest for gender justice.”¹⁴

In our dialogues, after a period of establishing trust and mutual respect, boys articulated their patriarchal privilege quite succinctly, often as a matter of fact, and often also providing cultural and economic reasons explaining why this privilege continues to exist. Rahul, a boy in 7th grade, notorious for making blunt and insightful statements, told Anshu in one dialogue: *“Didi, Kaushal’s father (referring to his friend who was sitting next to him) doesn’t have a lot of money. If one day he cannot send both Kaushal and his sister to school, he will have to ask his sister to sit at home and not go to school. He will never stop Kaushal’s education because he (Kaushal) will earn and provide for them one day.”* Another boy agreed and replied, *“The girl will get married and live in a different home.”* Here, boys are not only naming their privilege of being the child for whom education is more valued and whose education will not be stopped even when money is scarce, but they are also beginning to name the gendered nature of political-economy and the patriarchal construction of institutions of marriage and family. We help them to first name their gender-based privileges in the classroom, without guilt. It is important that they understand this—recognize their privilege and learn that they get more food, more education, more freedom, more respect —just because they are boys. This naming of the social and political circumstances framing their lives enables them to see “that to live lives marked as ‘male’ and ‘female’ is to live different realities, . . . and that hierarchical organizing of the world around gender is key to maintaining social order” as we know it.¹⁵ We try to help them see, that the world as we know it is not orderly, it is violent and unjust.

Therefore, boys are engaged critically to analyze social institutions and practices in order to see how they are biased, and simultaneously become aware of what girls lose simply because they are girls. Boys must recognize this and understand the structural nature of patriarchy socializes both boys and girls, assigning differential gendered roles, responsibilities, status, and power. Furthermore and perhaps this is the most important thing—boys like girls, must understand that patriarchy is not a ‘natural’ form of social organization—it is a historical, social construct, which can be changed. It is of prime importance to ‘de-naturalize’ patriarchy and the attendant social norms in boys’ imaginations and help them visualize alternative, more egalitarian social structures.

¹³ibid. p. viii.

¹⁴Inaugural Address, 2nd Men Engage Global Symposium, 2014.

¹⁵Menon, *Seeing like a feminist*, p. viii.

This recognition and awareness of men's unjust privileges and of sexist oppression that girls and women deal with every day is a key precursor to building an awareness that boys can make a serious contribution to change a cruel, unfair social structure that leaves their sisters, mothers, and friends at such a disadvantage. Such an understanding serves as the springboard from where we can collectively imagine other possible ways of being. It provides a way to ask about the justice of patrilocality: "Why do girls have to migrate to their husbands' home, when that leaves them so vulnerable? Why are only sons expected to take care of parents in their old age? Why is marriage the only way of securing girls' livelihood?" They need to ask questions about girls' lives, de-naturalize their condition, and think about prevalent social norms and ask "How does this affect girls' lives?" Discussions on sharing work, freedom of mobility, education, rights, equality of opportunity, etc., have to be based on this initial understanding and must come after the privileges are named and recognized.

The next step in raising feminist consciousness thus becomes to collectively formulate "an alternate vision of the future".¹⁶ That is, first, to critically interrogate the current system, see that it is unjust, recognize that far from being natural, it is a social and historical construct, and lastly to imagine an alternate system that is fairer and less cruel.

Note to the Teachers

Given below are some key points for teachers to keep front and center while working with boys:

Pedagogical points

- Making boys' lives better is the teachers' primary goal: The teachers must communicate very clearly that their primary purpose is to help boys make their lives better and become autonomous persons who view themselves and others as equal.
- Critical pedagogy must be rooted in an ethic of care framework: While guiding boys to critically examine their social realities, boys must feel secure in the knowledge that their teachers care about them as persons, and care enough to understand the lived reality of their worlds, sympathetically.
- The teacher should share her/his own experience of patriarchy, violent discriminatory practices, and encourage boys to do the same. Boys should be encouraged to express their feelings and emotions.
- Using experiences of female teachers, mothers, sisters, and other women boys care about is a powerful way of building empathy and helping boys realize the extent of harm gender-based violence and discrimination does to women. Lives of women they know are valuable resources for dialogues. Female teachers should share their own life with boys with openness and honesty. Boys should be encouraged to share their discussions with the girls and women in their families. Male teachers should also share their own experiences of how they have experienced patriarchy and been socialized into it. They can be powerful

¹⁶Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, p. 242.

role models for boys and should share their own experiences of how they have been able to critique and rise above their own patriarchal privileges, in favor of a more egalitarian way of being.

Conceptual Points

- The teacher should help boys learn what it means to “care” in non-patriarchal ways. They should also experience a different way of being cared for in school. The school should help them aspire to be men, who can take care of themselves and their families, but more importantly, men who will care for their families in nurturing ways. This altered conception of taking care of girls will make girls’ lives better too. It is essential to operate under a framework of care and to view these efforts as a collective reaching out for a better life for boys and (consequently) girls.
- It is important to de-naturalize social norms, gendered stereotypes, and patriarchal social structures, and help boys reconstruct an alternate, more egalitarian vision of society.

Cautionary points

- The teachers’ goal must be to educate boys to understand sexist oppression, and to enable them to name their gender-based privileges in the classroom, without guilt. It is very important that boys do not feel guilty or responsible for patriarchy, as this leads to a defensive non-responsive stance and is counter-productive. It is important to help them see that it is a societal issue and not an individual’s fault.
- Teachers must make a conscious effort not to be sexist themselves. This can sometime mean not attaching only words such as “brave, courageous, responsible, and angry” for boys and men, but also using words such as “caring, sensitive, and beautiful” for boys. This will encourage and welcome the feminine qualities in boys.
- The teacher must help boys perceive the difference between affirmative action for girls and women verses giving unfair privileges to girls. Owing to widespread discussions and public debate on girls’ rights these days, young boys are scared and reluctant to give up their privileges. They see any affirmative action for girls as either discrimination toward boys or an unfair advantage given to girls. It is therefore important to clarify this distinction. Teacher can give examples of situations where affirmative action is taken in state policy, or in education and employment for another oppressed group such as oppressed castes or religious minority and compare it with gender-based affirmative action. It is helpful to put things in historical perspective, pointing out how the above-mentioned groups have been severely disadvantaged for centuries and now need a leg to catch up.
- Teachers must engage in critical dialogues themselves and discuss the themes with the boys in advance. Critical dialogues among teachers will enable a greater understanding of the nuances of any topic and as such will help bring more clarity during dialogues in classrooms.
- It is important to not reinforce patriarchy by accidentally positioning boys as saviors of (and thus superior to) girls and women. While this is an easy and readily workable way to get a buy-in from boys, such a strategy would do more harm. Such a narrative is quite prevalent

these days in mass media, when often a pseudo-feminist actor makes impassioned pleas to men to save our women from gender-based violence. If need arises, teachers and children should critically examine these popular narratives, and shed light on sexist mass media. The explicitly stated shared goal of “making boys’ life better” is the key to prevent accidental feeding of such a perverted narrative to boys.

A Note on the Lesson Plans

The lesson plans in this curriculum are written with the intention of providing the teachers with both a sense of the broad goals/objectives of each session and the actual tools that they can bring into play to achieve these objectives in the classroom. We have listed the major objectives of each session and have provided the step-by-step guidelines. These can be modified and supplemented according to the appropriate contexts. We believe that the teachers know their children best, and as such they should proceed with the pace that they deem best for their children.

Each lesson has been interspersed with the examples and excerpts from actual dialogues with the boys in order to provide the teachers with the necessary language that they can use. In our experience and in our conversations with many stakeholders working with boys on gender, we found that practitioners and teachers were grappling with how to start talking to boys about gender and what to say in the classroom. We recognize that when it comes to talking about gender with men and more so with young boys, we (referring to the increasing number of people realizing the need to work with boys to bring gender equality) are still discovering the right language and the right approach. The best way we have found to remedy this gap and to provide teachers with something that they can actually use has always been to share our real classroom sessions. This has been done here by transcribing relevant excerpts from our dialogues which were conducted during the development of this curriculum.

While some basic necessary teaching material has been listed to facilitate the sessions, teachers should use their imagination and bring in more resources from children’s lives to make the dialogues closer to their realities. All material listed in the session are simple things that would be available in poor-resourced schools and communities, as well. The lesson plans have been designed for age groups above 14 years, and have emerged from discussions with working-class boys of the same age group. Nevertheless, we would encourage the teachers of younger kids to experiment and adapt some of the sessions that they see fit for their children.

About Study Hall Educational Foundation

SHEF began its work in 1986 to empower children’s lives and achieve equality through quality education for all. Through its schools and programs, SHEF has reached out to children from urban and rural backgrounds in and around Lucknow, including government schools in the states of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

SHEF's schools and programs include:

- Study Hall School, a K-12 co-ed school for middle-class children, with an integrated program for children with special needs: 2000 enrolled
- Prerna Girls School, a K-12 school for girls from low-income backgrounds: 1040 enrolled
- Prerna Boys School, a K-12 school for boys from low-income backgrounds: 150 enrolled
- Vidyasthali Kanar School, a K-12 rural co-ed school in Kanar, a village near Lucknow: 450 enrolled
- Digital Study Hall, SHEF's outreach arm where SHEF's best practices are shared using simple technology
- Gyan-Setu (Bridge of Learning), a cluster of Community Education Centres in low-income communities and migrant labour colonies for out-of-school children who are unable to attend Prerna Girls and Boys School: 750 children enrolled in 14 centers across Lucknow.

Altogether SHEF, with its dedicated team of more than 300 men and women, reaches out to approximately 60,000 students, teachers, and student teachers through its schools and programs. SHEF works closely with the state governments of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. SHEF is also part of several state, national, and international consultative bodies and networks working for educational reform and universalization of quality education, where we lend our expertise, experience, and unique perspective.

See Study Hall Educational Foundation (www.studyhallfoundation.org).

Lesson Plans

Lesson 1 | Knowing Ourselves: Who are we?

Objective

- To help break the ice with the boys: To begin building a relationship of trust and care between the teacher and students and among the boys themselves
- To help the teacher learn more about his/her students' lives and their social context
- To create a safe space in the classroom, where boys can listen to each other attentively. The first few sessions should help the boys feel "cared" for as they see a valued adult take an interest in their lives and in them as individuals. The attentive listening by teachers as boys talk about themselves validates and legitimizes their feelings and self-reflective reports. To help boys become more self-reflective, to learn more about themselves as they talk to others.

Method

- Telling our stories

Materials

- Paper, pencil

Duration

- 45-60 minutes

Activity: The Pair Game

The teacher plays the pair game with the students.

- The teacher has folded pieces of paper in 2 bowls. Each chit (the folded piece of paper) in the first bowl has a corresponding pair in the other bowl e.g.: pen/paper; shoes/socks; knife/fork; train/station etc. She asks half the boys to pick a chit from one bowl and the other half to pick from the other bowl. On the word GO, she asks them to unfold their chits and read them. They must then call out their chit words and look for their pairs. Once they find their pair, they run to the teacher. Whoever reaches first wins. The teacher can also give them some candy or a similar age-appropriate small reward.
- The teacher then asks the pairs to sit together and interview each other for the next 5 minutes, getting important information about each other, their families, likes, dislikes, hobbies etc. After that, they sit in a circle and introduce each other briefly to the rest of the class.
- The teacher then asks each student some questions so that they get to tell their own story in some detail to the whole class.
- The teacher can share her own story right at the beginning to break the ice and provide a sample. The introduction also humanizes the teacher to the students and gives them an insight into her life and who she is.

For example:¹⁷

T: My name is Urvashi, I have a younger sister, she has an organization called Khoj and works with artists. She manages artists who paint. Then I have three brothers. My father had a company. We used to live in Rawalpindi. Do you know where that is? In Pakistan. Do you know about India's partition?

Students: Yes.

T: What happened after partition? Pakistan was created. And who all came to India? Hindus came here and Muslims went there. Almost all the Hindus came here; my parents are Hindu, they weren't even married then and had to leave. Then they got married on January 30, 1948. What had happened on that day? Why is that day so significant in India's history? Someone died...

S4: Indira Gandhi?

T: No. In 1948, go back further.

S6: Rajiv Gandhi?

T: Mahatma Gandhi had died that day. He was assassinated. Then my parents started living in Pune. They set up a factory there. Initially we were extremely poor, our house had only two rooms, all of us lived in it, my three elder brothers. I had a sister who died after that, my two brothers were born, and then me. Then my father started doing many things—he had a shop in Rawalpindi.

¹⁷In the excerpts quoted in the curriculum from our dialogues, “S” stands for “student” and “T” for “teacher.”

When he was 14, his father died and he had to dropout from school. Then he started working in shops when his business gained momentum, but the partition happened so he had to come here. My father tried to start a new business but nothing worked, he was extremely worried, his parents had passed away, and he had a family to support. Then he setup the factory Weikfield Food Products for making custard and jelly at home, though it was a small house. My uncle used to transport the products on his bicycle and go door to door to sell them. My mother used to put labels on the products at night after finishing household work, and this way the business started growing. Eventually, they got a bigger house to work in. Today Weikfield products are made in a huge factory. You must have seen them in shops—they are sold in India and abroad also. He was poor, but he worked hard. Yesterday you said that you're afraid of poverty, so what's my point here? My parents were extremely poor, but they got over it; they worked really hard and now they have a huge company. My father asked my brother to come and work at the factory as soon as he finished school at the age of 16. The factory was in a house only, then they got a bigger house now all of them work in the company. I have two daughters, one is married and lives in New York. The married one is Nidhi, she has a five-year-old daughter. The other one is Shibani, you must know her, she isn't married, she lives in Delhi and works here and there.

In our session, the teacher asked the boys the following questions, after reassuring them:

"I will ask some more questions, and anybody can answer. We are here just to chat, so don't worry about anything. This is not a test—this is just for us to get to know each other. I know you know each other, but I don't, and I want to get to know you more than just your name."

The teacher asks each student to tell her about their families, what their parents do, how many siblings they have, what they do, whether they work or not and why they joined Prerna, and how they found out about it. They all share their stories in turn. They all tell the group why they came, a little about their previous school, why they left, about their parents, what work they do, and how they found Prerna. Some of the students are from an NGO that provides shelter to boys found on the street and on the railway platform. They tell their stories, about why they were in the NGO, such as the one below:

"I am from Ehsaas. It's a place for children who don't have a home or parents or have run away due to some problems at home. I didn't run away, but the others have. My brother brought me to Ehsaas because we are very poor. The people at Ehsaas sent me here."

The other boys relate their stories—why they had run from home in some detail. Some ran because of violence at home. . .

S: I ran away from home.

T: Why?

S: There were some problems.

T: What kind of problems?

S: The problem was with me. That's why I ran away.

T: What problem? You can say it.

S: A had a step-mother.

T: Did she beat you?

S: No, she didn't beat me. My real mother died, and after that, we shifted to a new place. I wasn't comfortable there with her, so I ran away.

T: At what age?

S: I was 5 or 6 years old.

T: Wow, that's very young! Where were you living?

S: In Bihar.

T: So how did you run away from there?

S: I took a train. I had no idea about anything.

T: Weren't you scared?

S: At that time I didn't feel anything.

T: Were you carrying anything?

S: No, I just went like that.

T: What about money and food—how did you manage?

S: I just managed somehow.

T: Were you alone or was someone with you?

S: I had met a friend at the railway station there in the middle of the journey.

T: Then?

S: Then we would just roam around here and there.

T: For how long were you roaming around like this?

S: I don't really know.

T: A month? Two months? Ten days or five days?

S: A year.

T: A whole year! How did you manage food, water, etc?

S: Here and there I would sweep and clean.

T: At people's homes?

S: No, not at homes, at the railway station only.

T: People would give you money?

S: Yes.

T: Who gave you money for sweeping?

S: People just give money. It's like that.

T: Other sweepers would give you work?

S1: It's like when you're travelling on the train, then some people voluntarily sweep the floor, and then ask for money.

T: Okay, you would sweep inside the train. Did it fetch you enough money to eat?

S: I used to get lots of money.

T: How much did you earn in one day? Hundred? Fifty rupees? Twenty five?

S: It was enough.

T: Okay, then what happened?

S: After that we used to go and hang out, had our outings.

T: Okay, then?

S: Then one day at a station, we saw there was a play happening, we didn't really know what was going on, then an older boy came to us. He asked us where we had come from.

S: We didn't tell him anything. Then he asked us

T: Did he ask you to join them?

S: No, he asked us to go along with him. Then we asked where to. He told us about a home which was an NGO, and asked us if we were interested in going there. We refused. Then we went back. But then they came and got us.

T: Did your parents ever try to find you?

S: My parents are no more.

T: **You said earlier that you had a step-mother. She didn't try to find you?**

S: No.

T: **And what about your father? Did he die?**

S: No, my second father just left home.

T: **Where did he go?**

S: He just left and never came back.

T: **You didn't have any brother or sister?**

S: One brother and one sister.

T: **Where are they? Are they there only?**

S: They are with their step-mother.

T: **At home with their step-mother. Are they older or younger than you?**

S: Both are younger than me.

T: **Okay. And how long have you been at Ehsaas?**

S: About five or six years.

T: **Are you happy there?**

S: Yes.

The teacher then asks the boys if they like their school. If yes, then why? Which subjects did they like the most? She can also ask why they think education is important. She can ask the boys about their future aims: *"So, now tell me, does anyone have an idea about what they want to become when they grow up? Okay—wow! Everyone has an idea. Great then, tell me..."*

Note to Teachers

- The teacher must be genuinely interested in the boys' stories and listen attentively, asking many helpful questions. Often, other boys interject with explanations and clarifications. The teacher must also make sure everyone is listening attentively. **The boys must feel respectfully attended to and responded to.**
- Teacher should also pay attention to "how" boys describe themselves and other people in their lives, so that she can help them make an alternative narrative later. For example: Boys describing themselves as "problems," is probably because that is how others have described them.
- The teacher must end the class by thanking the boys for sharing their stories and telling them how much she enjoyed getting to know them.

Homework

Draw a picture of boys' lives at home and write a few short lines or caption.

Lesson 2 | Knowing yourself: My life, likes, dislikes

Objectives

- To help the boys get more in touch with themselves and their feelings
- To work with boys to develop their emotional intelligence, along with a language for emotions
- To establish that it is okay to talk about their emotions and feelings

Method

- Using art and drama to enable the expression of emotions
- Critical dialogues
 - Still-images: A still pose made by participants using their own bodies

Duration

- 60 minutes

Activity: Life dramas and still-images

- Teacher should briefly recap the last session. She should remind the boys that in last class they shared their lives and tell them that they are going to continue doing that but in a different way. Teacher will explain to students that they will show what their daily routine is through just actions and no words.
- Teacher should mime her daily routine—showing that she gets up, goes for a walk, showers, has food, and goes to work, as well as where she reads, writes, talks, works with people, comes home, eats her food, watches TV, and goes to sleep.
- Teacher should then ask the boys to each do the same.
- After each boy finishes, others ask questions about their drama and in response, boys should describe verbally what they have shown.
- Teacher should then ask each child to repeat their drama, but also express through action and facial expression how they feel about their lives: ***“Show us how you feel about your life. Is it good, difficult, frightening, tense, fun?”*** She should start by showing her own life. And then express it verbally in response to their questions.

For example:

S: I just go to school and come home. If I want to go somewhere else, then the doors are closed. I don't have any freedom.

T: As if there is a wall in front of you?

Another child acted as though he were carrying something very heavy:

S: Like he's carrying a big burden!

After all the children act out their lives and feelings and describe them, with the teacher providing the language they need, the teacher can move on to making still images. She can ask the students to make a statue pose and give them some examples herself too: ***“Now we will do the following: Now***

go and stand anywhere in the room. Make a single image or statue, which will show how we feel about our lives—happy or not, over-worked, free, unfree, if you feel there is a wall in front of you.”

- They all should make the still-image (a still pose using their body), including the teacher. Then she can ask them to look at each other’s images/pose and just keep them in mind.
- She should bring them back to the circle and ask them: *“Now tell me what do you like most in your life? Everyone, one by one. You can even say more than one thing. Okay—so tell us.”* Teacher’s tone must always be inviting, non-judgemental, interested, and curious. The students must feel that she is genuinely interested in their answers.
- Boys say things like:

S1: I like being at home with my mother.

S11: I like playing sports.

S9: I like playing games and travelling.

S4: I like studying.

S3: I like spending time with my family.

S2: I like playing sports.

S5: I don’t know. Can’t think of anything.

T: All of you mentioned various things that you like: Spending time with family, playing sports, travelling. So, what is it that you like the most?

S5: I like being with my friends.

S10: I like going out for a vacation with my family.

S6: Playing cricket and studying.

S8: Reading stories.

S7: I like playing basketball, badminton and being at home with my family.

Teacher should then ask them to tell everyone what they dislike about their lives.

T: Okay now tell me what do you dislike the most in your life? Something which you don’t like at all.

S2: When my mother scolds me.

T: And when does she do that?

S2: Whenever I’m playing.

[Many other students mention their father or mother’s scolding.]

S5: I don’t like it when people don’t follow what they preach, when people ask others to do what they will never do themselves.

T: Like what?

S5: Say, you ask me to sweep the floor, that’s okay, but I will not like it if you never do it yourself.

S4: I don’t like sitting at the pan shop.

T: Yes, no one said that they don’t like working. Do you like going to work? You like working at the restaurant?

S11: I don’t like it, but I have to do it.

T: Yes, that’s what I’m saying.

S1: Suppose someone asked me to do something, and if I'm not able to do it because of some other work, then I don't like that.

T: Okay. What about you?

S3: I don't like working alone.

T: What kind of work?

S3: That I enacted before.

T: Okay. Who all work here? Please raise your hands. Okay, you didn't tell us what you do.

S7: House cleaning.

T: Do you like doing it?

S7: It's boring, but I have to do it.

S11: I don't like it.

S10: I like what I do.

T: Why?

S10: Sometimes I like it, sometimes I don't.

T: What about you?

S1: I like talking to people who work there but [...]

T: At what age did you start working?

S11: I've been working for the past four years.

T: How old are you?

S11: Fourteen.

T: So you started working at the age of ten. You?

S10: I was sixteen years-old.

S1: I was fourteen.

S7: I was nine years-old.

Teacher should make short comments and ask scaffolding questions after each child speaks.

After this discussion, the teacher can give each child a notebook and have them cover it with colorful paper, or draw something on it.

T: Okay. Tell me, does anyone here keep a diary in which you write about your own life? Oh good—you keep a diary? Very good! So, what do you write in your diary?

S: Whatever happens in my life.

T: Yes, events take place in our lives, and because of these events we feel things—different emotions like fear, happiness, anger, jealousy etc. So we can write about both things—what happened and how we felt about it. Yes? So this diary is for that. You can write about your lives, what you do, what happens to you, what you like, what you don't, what you are frightened of etc. Like you talked about here today. You can write as much or as little as you want.

Teacher should end the session with instructions to the boys to bring pictures that they want to use to make a collage. She can show them a sample. ***"We will make a collage of pictures about your lives. You can also draw along with the pictures, and write if you like. So, bring some pictures and we will have magazines here also for you to use."***

Homework

The teacher should ask the boys to look for pictures and magazines because they are going to make a collage about their lives next time. She should ask them to look for pictures that can depict things about their lives, their fears, what they like, or don't like, or pictures that depict people in their life. She should tell the boys to bring any pictures that they would like to use to tell other boys about themselves and their lives.

Lesson 3 | My life: Collage making

Objective

- To continue to get to know the boys
- To give boys a context and the opportunity to focus on and discuss their own lives
- To help boys get comfortable with using diverse media to express themselves
- To also give boys a sense of 'constructing' their lives, thereby gaining a feeling of having more control over them

Method

- Collage making
- Dialogue around the collage making

Materials

- Magazines, newspapers, posters, scissors, paper, glue

Duration

- 60 Minutes

Activity: Collage making

- Teacher should do a recap of yesterday and introduce them to the day's activity: "Today we will do some art work, OK? How do you like art? Do you enjoy it?"
- To get them started, she could invite everyone to introduce their families to each other—how many people in the family and what they do

S: I'm Rahul Yadav, in my house there is my mother, grandmother, two sisters and my uncle.

T: And your father?

S: He is not there.

T: Where is he?

S: I don't know—he left us a long time ago.

T: And your sisters? Are they going to school?

S: Yes...in a school near our house.

T: How old are they?

Then the teacher should start them on the collage making, giving them detailed instructions: “You can all sit at your ease and whatever we have talked about, similarly now put that on the chart paper by using pictures. You have to make a collage about your life, who are the people in it, what you like, your fears—you spoke about these last time, remember? Your photos should tell your story. You can use bubbles, but write less—let the pictures and your drawing do the telling. Does this sound like fun? You want to do it? We never really think like this, right? That you can make a picture-story of your life? This is the first time I’ve made a collage, about my own life. But this can be so much fun....?”

Students are allowed to talk to each other and discuss each other’s work as they make their collage. Teacher should make one of her own too but should also be available to help others with their collages.

Homework

Students take their collages home and finish.

Lesson 4 | My life

Objective

- To continue to get to know the boys
- To give boys a context and the opportunity to focus on and discuss their own lives
- To help boys get comfortable with using diverse media to express themselves

Method

- Showing their collages
- Dialogue about their pictorial representation in the collages

Materials

- Magazines, newspapers, posters, scissors, paper, glue

Duration

- 60 Minutes

Activity

- Teacher invites all the students to show their collages to her and to the whole group. And to explain their collages: "What have they tried to show in their collage?" Example:

S2: This is my friend Deepak. I like cycling. And here the thief has been caught by the police.

T: Have you ever been caught?

S2: They have caught my brother. He took my money.

T: So you went to the police?

S2: No, he was caught at home only.

T: So did he return the money? How much was it?

S2: Yes, Rs. 10.

T: Here you are with your parents. You like cars. What is this?

S2: I'm scared of working.

T: Scared or you don't like it?

S2: I don't like it.

T: Okay. You can write a bit also, so it's understandable.

...

T: What is this picture about?

S: Here I've tried to show how to achieve my goals.

T: This is really cool. He has stuck the picture of a mountain which symbolizes a difficult task, and this man is trying to reach the top. You can also write something on it so that it's easy to understand. (To everybody:) Please write on your collages too, so people don't have to ask what they are about. Also how about using an interesting title? The main title is "My life," but put something more interesting, like a movie title. If your life is a movie, then what will its title be? And you can keep adding to your collages and making them better.

The teacher then discusses the collages generally commenting:

T: Okay, most of you have put pictures of what you like and not about your dislikes, which is good in a way, but we'll discuss this a bit more. Many of you talked about your dreams and aspirations. One of you wrote that you want to be successful no matter how difficult the journey is. He wrote that he wants to be like MS Dhoni. Someone wants to be an actor, someone a singer, a photographer, a social worker, etc. But there are obstacles in life also, not everything happens according to our wishes. Before we had talked about our fears, many of you said that you're afraid of not being able to achieve what you want in life and be who you want to be. Let us think about what we don't like at all: What we are afraid of. You had talked about a wall being in front of you. Anyone writes poetry here? No one! We'll write it later. Some doors open in our lives, like, education opens a door for us; an obstacle gets removed. We often feel that the door is closed, like lack of money closes a door for us. But will those doors be closed forever? They can be opened, right? Many of you weren't studying but now that you are, doors have started to open. So, we have to recognize those obstacles and think about how to overcome them. So, what don't you like?

The teacher divides the students into groups of two and asks them to discuss their dislikes, fears, and hurdles that they might have to face in their lives and also to spend some time writing down what they have related about their fears etc. She begins with her own:

“I was afraid that I might get married into a family where my husband and in-laws didn’t treat me well, or that we don’t have enough money or if I’m not able to visit my parents home. I had a sister who became mentally ill because of her in-laws and an aunt who was treated very badly by her husband, so I was afraid this might happen to me also.”

The female teachers tell their own stories truthfully, with the goal of getting the students to attend to their special plight as women, even though they are richer and seemingly empowered. Anand also shares his fears:

Anand: When I was little, I wasn’t good at studies and was told that everyone works hard for a living in our family and that we don’t have any inherited wealth. I wasn’t able to score well in exams, so they used to give an example that if I don’t study hard, then I will have to sell vegetables in the market near my house. They said it like it was a very bad thing, and I couldn’t comprehend whether it was good or bad. So, I used to look at where those vegetable vendors lived; they lived in a small house. I was afraid that I’d be kicked out of my house and live in poverty.

- After the group discussion, the teacher instructs the students to make a collage specially reflecting their dislikes, their fears and hurdles and to also give it a title. This can be made at home.
- She tells them to also show the collages to their sisters if they are over 11 years old or/and their mothers and to interview them. “Ask them the same questions that you were asked here—about their lives, their likes and dislikes, their fears, and hurdles. Ok? Let’s see what they say.”
- She wraps up by asking them if they liked making the collage. And comments “You thought about your lives and made this. Only when you think about your life, reflect on it, and on yourself, do you learn more about yourself. Otherwise, like he said—life will just pass you by, right?”

Homework

Make your collages about your dislikes, fears, and hurdles, and discuss them with your sisters and mother.

Lesson 5 | My life, my fears

Objective

- To continue to get to know the boys

- To give boys a context and opportunity to focus on and discuss their own lives
- To find out what their main concerns and fears are
- To legitimize their fears and give the message that it's okay to have fears
- To recognize each other's fears and empathize with each other's circumstances. This would also pave the way for talking about the vulnerability of girls' and women's lives and building empathy among boys for girls' lives.

Method

- Discussion in their dialogue circles
- Drama

Materials

- Collages

Duration

- 60 Minutes

Activity

- Teacher should start the session with a drama activity, as this not only breaks the ice, it also frees up the students and makes the following discussion easier.
- In order to kick start them the teacher should ask them to describe their fears – ***“We are all afraid of one thing or another. Our dislikes are different from our fears. What are you afraid of in your life? Let me give you an example: we are often afraid of what will happen in the future. ‘Am I going to be serving at a tea stall all my life, for example. ‘What if I don’t pass this exam? What if I’m not able to make something of myself?’ Don’t you have fears like these?”***
- The teacher can again begin by naming her own fears and asking any other adults in the room to name theirs. Example – ***“Anand: There are things in my life which I like, so I’m afraid to lose them. It can be a person or it can be a facility, like my car. I’m used to them and I’m afraid of losing them.”***

The boys relate their fears – for example:

T: Now you all tell us about any fears that you might have.

S6: I’ll feel really bad if I’m not able to be who I want to be when I grow up. My mother spends so much money on my education and I’ll feel bad if I can’t fulfill her expectations.

T: Okay, who else will tell?

S8: I feel the same. If I’m not able to succeed after all this education, this thought scares me.

S1: When my uncle or some other relative express their frustration towards me, that I’ll not be able to make something of myself, then I’m afraid that my mother will feel bad after hearing all that.

S2: Aunt, I want to be a cricketer when I grow up and that will require a lot of money. So I’m afraid of the thought that I won’t be able to fulfill my dream.

S3: I'm afraid of being far from my family.

S4: I'm afraid of not being successful enough when I grow up.

S9: I don't want to be away from my parents.

T: And, who else?

S11: Auntie, I wish that there are no fights at home and everyone lives peacefully and happily.

S10: I'm afraid of being far from my loved ones.

S7: My father is spending money on my education and I'll feel bad if I'm not able to make something of myself.

T: But why do you think that you won't be able to succeed in life?

S7: Because of lack of money.

- Teacher should now begin the drama activity. She should tell the boys, **"let's go anywhere in the room and when I say go, everyone act out what your biggest fear is. What are you afraid of? Who are you afraid of? Act out what you have put in your collages. I will also do the same."**
- Students make their little tableaux. The teacher should ask them to do so one by one, so everyone can see what the others have done. There is no talking or elicitation of responses during this time. It's a silent viewing session.
- Then the teacher asks the students to act out one still image showing how they feel, expressions on their face too must be appropriate to the feeling.
- Teacher then gets the students back in the circle and gives them some time to finish their collages if they have not done so at home.
- Teacher glances at all of them and comments on how good they look. **"Your collages are beautiful and I can see how you have thought carefully about each picture. So let's present our collages and explain them one by one."**
- Students all show their collages and the teacher helps to move the discussion along by discussing certain pivotal points in the collage.

T: Does anyone else have police in their collage?

Students: Yes.

T: Has the police ever troubled you before? Raise your hand.

[Two boys raise their hands.]

S1: Not me personally.

T: You or your family members?

S1: Yes, they have troubled my family members.

T: They could have come in your house or your neighborhood or even your workplace, where you felt that, "they have come to annoy us." How many have felt this?

[Almost all the students raise their hands.]

T: What is the first thing that comes to mind when you see a police officer outside?

S2: That they won't do anything.

S1: If I'm on a bike then I'm afraid that they will stop me.

S2: If a person has done something wrong, then he'll be scared. Otherwise he won't be afraid of the police.

- Teacher should look at each collage and discuss the issues raised with everyone.

S: I'm afraid of the dark...of being scolded by a girl. If I do something silly and people laugh at me, I'm also afraid of that...If I work hard for something and it doesn't work out in the end, I'm afraid of that. I'm afraid of a robbery taking place in my house. I'm afraid of getting dengue. I'm afraid of a fire breaking out in my house, of being poor always."

T: Who all have put the fear of poverty in their collages?

[Most of them raise their hands]

T: This is probably the biggest fear – you all have raised your hands.

S: [Student] hasn't.

T: But you've put it in your collage. Lack of money. That is what poverty is, Vishal—not having enough money.

S: This is different, like I don't have enough money to study further, now, but if I work hard then why won't I have the money.

- Teacher should similarly discuss these issues and elaborate on them further. He/she should use their collages as a context to discuss students' lives and fears with them as a whole, beginning with a discussion about whether violence is an essential component of fighting, about poverty, and the general precarious nature of their lives. It is a very good way of gaining insight into their lives while also showing them that the teacher cares and understands how difficult life is for them. For example:

T: What about this fear of getting scolded by a girl?

[No one raises their hand]

T: A girl could shout at you whether you've done something wrong or not. She could think that you've done something wrong. Does that happen?

S2: Like in a crowded place if someone pushes from behind but she shouts at you.

T: Has that happened with anyone?

S3: It happens while traveling.

T: In a bus. Who all take the bus here? So, does it happen?

S4: Sir, it has happened once.

T: How many of you have been scolded by a girl? What about your sister or mother?

[All of them raise their hands.]

T: Have you ever been shouted at by a girl who you don't know?

[S2 and S6 raise hands. Another boy also nods.]

S5: It wasn't really shouting but she said something impolitely. I was standing in a line someone had pushed from behind and the girl was just ahead of me.

T: What about you?

S6: I was shouted at by a boy.

S3: I was also once shouted at while crossing a road.

T: Who is afraid of a fight?

[Four boys raise hands.]

T: Why aren't the rest of you afraid of fighting? What about you?

S7: Sir he will hit me so I will also hit him.

S1: People fight but then they get hurt and start to bleed. That shouldn't happen.

T: Should we be afraid of fighting?

S1: Yes.

[Most boys say no.]

T: Why not?

S2: If you are afraid then he will bully you even more and want to hit you even more.

S1: We shouldn't fight without any reason.

S4: You shouldn't do such things that provoke others to fight with you.

S2: People fight without any reason.

S3: It doesn't have to be your fault.

T: If you want to progress in life then you will have to fight your obstacles. How many of you agree with this? But, a fight doesn't necessarily involve physically hitting someone.

[All of them raise their hands.]

T: We are not talking about fighting verbally, it involves violence.

[Two students put their hands down.]

T: We got freedom from the British by fighting or just like that?

Students: By fighting.

S6: By not fighting.

T: Do you have History as a subject? Who got us freedom?

Students: Gandhiji

T: How did he fight? Was he violent?

T2: He worshipped non-violence.

T: Let us revise what we discussed today. So, this collage is a collection of all the things we are afraid of. You've made two collages till now, one is about your lives and this one is about your fears. We can get a good picture of all our fears from this collage. Half of you say that we should fight, the other half says that we shouldn't. Some of you are afraid of the police, some of you are not. So, we are divided this way. We should try to understand our own selves; our fears and our lives. Next, we will take interviews of our sisters and mothers, so you have ask them about the same things and by the end you should be able to make a collage for them also. You can ask them other questions also, don't be bound by the questions that we have discussed.

T: What are the fears that were mentioned here?

[Common fears were noted down; Suraj reads them]

S7: Fear of poverty, fear of there being a fight in the house, fear of a robbery in the house.

T: Fear of a stranger entering the house. So, these three are our biggest fears. Does everyone have these fears? Is there anyone who doesn't have these fears?

[No one raises his hand.]

- Teacher should also explicitly state how important it is for everyone to understand themselves, their fears and their lives. Talking about them in a group makes it a social problem and issue

rather than an individual one and discussing it together also makes it a shared responsibility. Teacher should make sure to have a hopeful, optimistic, solution-oriented tone always. They should try to find solutions collectively and show how things can get better, pointing out how education is a great pathway and can help break cycles of poverty. Teacher points out others who have done so and gives examples of people from their everyday lives who have succeeded (may be school's alumna or older kids from their community). This discussion can take more sessions and should be continued if needed. The issues should be taken up in later sessions, too.

- Teacher should wrap up the conversation by referring to their homework. Not many of the boys have talked to their sisters or mothers about this. The teacher encourages them to do this— ***“So ask them the same things we have asked you here and maybe we can make a collage for them too, at some point. Maybe they have different concerns, so you can talk to them about those, like we have discussed them here.”*** The teacher is now moving them to thinking about the lives of the girls and women in their homes. The goal is to raise awareness, to help them see that even in the fragility of their lives, girls are worse off and to build a sense of empathy for that.

Homework

- Discuss the collages and your session with your sisters and mother.

Lesson 6 | Equality and difference

Objective

- To help boys understand what equality means
- To help clarify that equality does not mean uniformity and that different people can be equal
- To help them see that they are equal to people who are different from them
- To help them think of themselves as equal persons, which means that others (girls and boys) are equal, too
- To get them to see how they feel when they are not treated as equal persons and that girls feel the same
- To lead them to understand that equality is the cornerstone of democracy and we have a constitutional guarantee. So, as citizens we are all—girls and boys, equal persons—regardless of what our society, our religion or our families believe—because above all, we are citizens.

Method

- Critical dialogue

Materials

- The preamble to the Constitution of India

Duration

- 60 minutes

Activity

- Teacher should play the following game with the boys: Tell them that all people under 14 to go to one corner of the room; next, all people above 14 to go to another corner; Now all people with fair skins to go to one corner of the room; next, all males to go to one corner of the room and all females to another. Keep doing this, using whatever differences are apparent.
- Teacher should begin the discussion and point out that though none of the people in the room are the 'same' – are they still equal? For example, the conversation may go something like this:

T: Today we will try and understand what it means to be equal to someone else. In this room, we just saw how we are different in many ways. So, if we take all the people in this room, including me and Moni didi (older girl – the photographer), are we equal?

Boys: No, sir.

T: Why not?

S: She is a girl.

S: Everyone's skin color is different.

T: In this way no one is equal to anyone.

S1: No, sir.

T: If we say that we have the right to equality, then what does that mean?

S: It means that we have to take everyone along as we move forward.

T: Okay, what does that mean? ...Moni is here also. Are you and Moni equal?

Boys: No, sir.

T: What's the difference?

S: Clothes.

S2: She is a girl, we are boys.

S: Structure of the body. Her age.

T: She is a girl. So what's necessary for equality? If she wears the same clothes like you then will she be your equal?

Boys: No, sir.

T: So, structure of the body. But your bodies are also different, right?

T: Can't two different things be equal? You play in a basketball team, then everyone in the team is different, they run differently, jump differently, etc. But everyone in the team is equal. If you are in the same standard, but different sections, then you are also equal. Aren't Prerna girls and boys of the same standard equal?

S: I can't understand.

T: Some of you said that the boys here are not equal because they are different: different classes, different subjects, etc. So I'm saying that different things can also be equal. Can different things be equal?

S: Yes, they can be.

T: How? You and you are different so can you be equal?

S1: Sir, they are in different classes.

T: It doesn't matter how they are different, can they be equal?

S1: No, sir.

S2: They can be equal if they are in the same school.

S: They are equal only in the school, not outside.

S1: They are not equal even in the school.

T: Okay. Are they any two people in this room who say that they are equal?

[Two students] say that they are equal. Why?

S: Sir, we are in the same class.

S1: But sir, their height is different.

T: So if you are in same class and of the same height then you are equal? What are your full names?

S: [Says his full name]

S: [Says his full name]

T: So they are of different castes, are they still equal?

S1: Mine and his caste is also the same.

T: Okay, where does your family come from?

Boys: Village will be different.

S2: Language is different.

T: You will always find something different. If caste is same then "gotra" will be different, if that is also same then their wealth will be different, this can go on and on. Some difference will always be there. So when can they be equal?

S1: They can never be equal.

T: When are two people equal?

S: Twins are equal.

T: Among you all how else can two boys be unequal?

S: One is good at studies the other is not.

T: Does the school differentiate between them? Does the school ask them to wear different uniforms? Just by looking can I know who is better at studies?

Boys: No, sir.

...

T: We have been talking about equality for so long, let us try to define it. What does equality mean?

S: It means that he is also a human being and I'm also a human being. He also has two hands and I also have two hands. This means that we are all equal.

T: How many of you agree with him?

[Everyone raises hands.]

T: All of you agree with him! So he is saying that our bodies are the same and in the end we are all humans. So, why are we not equal?

S: Sir, caste, religion, etc. is different.

T: So, how do we know one's religion?

S1: Muslims have long beards.

T: Suppose there is a fight between a Christian and a Sikh, then who will be favored because of his religion's superiority?

S: Sir, they will not look at religion in this case.

T: Who will not look at religion?

S: Sir, the law.

S1: Sir, no one knows who is superior between the two.

T: If no one is same then why is the law not considering these differences? Why does the law not differentiate on the basis of caste or religion? What does the law say about equality? The law gives us the right to equality; why does it consider us equal when we are all different?

...

T: Suppose me and [student] get into a fight and we go to the police station, so will the police consider us equal? What will his first question be?

S1: No, sir, he will ask you what the matter is.

S: Ujjwal is much younger so they will listen to him more.

T: Imagine Ujjwal is a grown up.

S: Then they will listen to both of you.

T: Why?

S: Because it is their job to resolve fights. Police is meant for that only.

T: We just agreed that we are not equal, so why does the police treat us as equals? Why don't they discriminate on the basis of caste?

S: Police is meant to do that only. They have to treat everyone as equal.

S: The law accepts all religions.

S: The law does not subscribe to any religion; it just does its duty.

T: What is its duty?

S2: To serve the people.

S: To maintain discipline.

S: Because of the fear of punishment people will not do wrong things.

T: If we are wronged then we will get justice?

Boys: Yes, sir.

T: This is what the law is for. What is justice? There are 12 of you here, suppose I get 16 candies, give one to each and keep the four that are left with me. Is this justice?

Boys: No, sir.

S1: Sir, everyone has one candy, the four that are left should be crushed and divided equally.

T: We will distribute them equally and that will be justice. So, what is justice?

S: Everyone should get everything equally.

T: Yes, everyone will be treated equally. If you go to the police then they will treat you or him the same.

...

T: For any kind of justice, why is it necessary to consider everyone as equal?

S: So that he can also get justice.

T: It's very important to assume that everyone is equal for any kind of justice.

...

T: Being different doesn't mean you are unequal. Different just means different. But when we ask for justice then we are all equal. We can be different; we can come from a different village, religion, or caste, but we will all be equal. If we are not equal in the eyes of the law then what will happen? When we go to police or court then their decision would already be made. Like if you are from a certain caste then their decision would be based on that only without even knowing what actually happened.

...

T: We don't have to confuse being different with being unequal. We are all different. Being equal means whether we have the right to justice. Our constitution gives us the fundamental right to equality. We can be of any religion, caste, etc. Whenever we look to the law for justice, it will consider us equal. In the end, what matters is the law of the nation and not any law that you make inside your own house.

...

T: So far, we have talked about many things which make us unequal. For homework you have to write about the things which make us unequal or because of which we may not get justice. Will it ever happen that you don't get justice because of your age?

S: No, sir.

S1: We will get justice, age doesn't matter.

Boys: Justice will be done.

T: So, age doesn't matter. What about money? Suppose I have hundred rupees and you have ten and I hit you, will you get justice?

S: Yes, sir.

T: So, money also doesn't make a difference when it comes to justice?

Boys: Yes, sir.

T: What will make us unequal when it comes to justice? You have to write about that. Please write it down. You have to write about one quality that makes you unequal to others.

- Teacher should try to show that being different does not prevent people from being equal. In the eyes of the law, we are all equal. The same laws apply to all of us.
- Teacher should also read out the preamble of our constitution to demonstrate that our constitution guarantees all its citizens equality regardless of religion, caste or gender. Teacher should emphasize their citizenship and help them understand that equality is a fundamental right—as citizens they have equal rights! Teacher should discuss this until the boys assimilate this and learn to recognise themselves as citizens.
- Teacher should then lead them to see that girls, too, are citizens with the same fundamental right to equality. So, if we claim to be equal persons then by inference we owe the same recognition of equality to others, too. That is what it means to be an equal person—to grant

equality to others, too. In a hierarchical patriarchal society like India, it is difficult to understand and conceptualize the idea of equality. It means challenging and transcending firmly entrenched traditional hierarchical differences of caste, gender, and class. Their entire world view is framed by these and changing these conceptual frames involves an epistemological paradigm shift, almost Copernican in nature.

- This lesson of equality, citizenship, and democracy will have to be taught persistently in every session, in a variety of contexts, using many strategies, for there to be a change.
- Teacher should provide evidence to counter social conceptions of female inferiority, that girls aren't as smart as boys or not as strong. For example, *"girls' scores are higher than boys often; they make very good sports persons."*

Teacher must use ways in which boys feel unequal and unfairly treated to show that girls feel the same and deserve equality like they do. That everyone is equal in terms of being a person with human dignity whether they are rich, poor, upper caste, lower caste, woman, or man. Social norms that say otherwise are wrong. That is why we have laws against discrimination. We should know these laws and uphold them. Teacher can cite some laws, for instance, the right to education, right to equal inheritance in parental wealth, same penal code for all. Teacher should point out that despite these laws, Dalits are discriminated against. She should also help them see how women are discriminated against—they don't get a share in their parental wealth and they don't get the same education? Why is this? It is because social norms are backward and not in line with our constitutional provisions. But we can change these norms if we change ourselves and get others to change as well.

Homework

Make a list of ways in which inequality manifests itself in our society. What makes you feel unequal? Interview your sisters and mothers and ask them if they feel equally treated. What are the ways in which they feel unequally treated? Write a short report about your interview.

Lesson 7 | Girls' lives

Objective

- To help boys begin to see how girls' lives are very different from theirs
- To discuss whether the differences are fair to them
- To build a sense of empathy with the girls and women in their own lives
- To build and awareness of gender discrimination in families

Method

- Dialogue centered around the boys' interviews of their sisters/mothers/sisters-in-law

- Game

Materials

- Interviews done by the boys

Duration

- 60 Minutes

Activity

- Teacher should do a recap of the last session and ask them if each of them have interviewed one girl/woman in their homes. Then she should inform them that today they were going to talk about girls and not about them.
“So the questions you were going to ask were as follows:
- What is your daily routine?
- What are your likes and dislikes?
- What are your fears?”
- Students should get into their culture circle and begin sharing their interview results. Teacher should ask scaffolding questions, especially pointed at bringing out discriminatory differences, for example:

S: My sister is older than me. She also goes to school. She gets up at 6 am, gets dressed, makes breakfast for me and herself. After coming back from school, she has lunch, then does housework, like cleaning the house, doing dishes, etc. Then she studies for a while. Then she cooks food, studies for a while, has dinner, and goes to sleep. She likes listening to music, dancing, travelling, reading comic books, and spending time with her friends.

T: When does she play? It's not in the routine you have described.

S: She plays sometimes at home.

T: Doesn't she go out to play like you do? You said you go out to play cricket after school everyday.

S: No, at home only.

T: Why can't she go out to play?

S: She has to study and do the housework.

T: And when does she spend time with her friends?

S: In school and when she walks back with them after school.

T: What about hanging out with them later, after school, in the evening?

S: No, parents don't let them go out in the evening. And they have to cook and all.

T: So, she doesn't get to go out a lot, but she likes to, right? Hm.

- After such interactions with each student, the teacher should consolidate the conversation and ask the boys to point out the main differences in the boys account of their own lives and those of their sisters. For example, the conversation went something like this in our class:

T: So, I heard the daily routines of your sisters, your aunt, etc., and I am thinking of your own routines, which you had shared earlier, what differences do you see? We saw that they are different, right? So, what are those differences?

S11: We get to play, they don't.

T1: Yes, you all play in the evening.

S7: They don't get to go out.

T1: They don't get to play and go out but they all mentioned in their interviews that they like going out. What other difference is there?

S5: They can't go out without permission, we can.

T1: Okay. What else?

S11: They have to cook.

T1: Yes, they get up so early. Your sister gets up at 5am. What time do you get up?

S11: 8 or 8:30 am.

T1: Exactly! So, they have to cook food. What other difference is there? Some of you also work outside, they also work outside but they come back and do household chores also; they have to study also in that time. So, neither do they get time to play, nor are they allowed. Why aren't they allowed? I don't see girls in playgrounds, only boys. Not the school's playground, outside I mean. Why is it so?

S4: Aunt, they play in the evening.

T1: I've never seen them playing in the evening. Nor was it written in your interview; you had said they play on Sundays.

T2: You had said that now they won't play, something like that.

S11: Now they have grown up, parents say that they have to work at home, and it's not an age to play.

T1: Why not? Let's think about it. Why do they say that it's not appropriate to play at this age?

S11: If they go out to play, then who will do the work at home?

T1: You all. Think about it. Just like you they also like playing but they can't because they have to work at home. So is this fair? We never even thought about it. When I was little, my three brothers used to go out in the evening to play cricket. I was very rarely allowed to go because I had to work at home and take care of my younger cousins. I had to iron all the clothes at home. I didn't like that. Do you think they like it? No, right? They are also just like you. The qualities that you all mentioned are the same. Both should be beautiful, good-natured, obedient, know how to cook, intelligent, etc. A lot of it is the same. But their life is very different from yours. We haven't talked about their fears yet, we will. We need to think about it. We should think what must be going on in their heads. They get up before you, cook for everyone, serve food, then have it themselves, then get ready and go to school. Many of them work outside also. They come back and work at home also. How many of you are 16 year old? There isn't much difference between your ages. He is also 16 and she is also 16. So why can't she play at that age? There are other girls here also. Moni what was your routine when you were younger?

Moni: Aunt, I used to get up at 5am, cook food, do other work at home, come to school. After going back home again I did the chores, served food for everyone, and I used to eat at last. Then after cleaning up everything I used to start studying after 11 pm and go to sleep after 1 am.

T1: What about playing?

Moni: Very rarely, when I got time, otherwise only on Sundays. They used to tell me to stay at home because I was a girl and do the chores.

T1: So, we should think about this.

T2: We tell girls that it is not appropriate to go out or play at this age. Why is it so?

T1: One of you said that if they go out, then who will do the work at home? Any other reason?

S4: They are girls and people misbehave outside.

T1: Okay. Bad behavior. What else?

S8: When girls go out then boys stare at them.

T1: So, they will harass them. What else?

T1: We think that they have to stay at home only. Whatever they do for recreation it should be inside the house. Boys should go out and girls should stay at home. They are not allowed to go out and play with friends. So, we need to think about it, why it is like this. Please think about it, next time we can discuss. But we have been able to see the difference. Okay, now let us talk about their fears.

S4: She wants to be a dancer, but family doesn't support her. They want her to have nice job, work in a bank. She is most afraid of losing her father; she is afraid of discontinuing her studies in the middle.

T1: Why would that happen?

S4: Because of lack of money. She is scared the most when her father gets sick. Among natural calamities, she is most afraid of tornadoes.

T1: Who else will share?

S11: Biggest hurdle in fulfilling her dream is marriage.

T1: What's her dream?

S11: To become a doctor. Then people's mentality; they think that a girl can't do something like that. Another hurdle is brothers' interference. She wants a man who will understand and support her. She wants her husband to be a doctor. She wants to live with him, but not be dependent on him.

T1: What is your sister's age?

S11: She is 17. She is afraid of losing her freedom. She is afraid of earthquakes and fire.

T1: Okay, who else will share?

S9: She is afraid of losing her parents and sleeping alone. She is also afraid of cyclones.

S13: She is afraid of being separated from her family. She is also afraid of the sound of thunder.

- Teacher should try and get boys to see how different girls' lives are, more circumscribed, less free, with more work, less leisure, their fears, too, are different—related to marriage, in-laws, leaving their parents' home. She should point out that girls are like them, try to get them to empathize with them and question the fairness of this discriminatory treatment. The goal should be to see very clearly, in a personal way, the differential treatment boys and girls get at home and understand the unfairness of it. It is important to do so without making the boys feel that it is their fault. So the teacher must explicitly state that it isn't their fault. She should even ask who is responsible for this differential treatment – their families? Society? Social gender norms? She should emphasise that society is a socio-historical construct—it is constructed socially—and in

time, it is not fixed but constantly changing. It can and does change when social action is taken. So social gender norms can be changed if everyone—boys and girls—take action.

- Teacher can wrap up with a short drama activity. She should ask the students to repeat the drama activity they did in an earlier session where they acted out their own lives. She should ask them to do this again, but this time show what they had learned about their sisters'/girls' lives.

Homework

Discuss with their sisters, mothers, and fathers what they have been discussing in class about the differential treatment for boys and girls and ask them some of the questions they discussed in class. Is it fair to girls?

Lesson 8 | Being a girl

Objective

- To help build boys' awareness about how girls' lives are different from theirs
- To discuss whether the differences are fair to them
- To continue to build a sense of empathy with the girls and women in their own lives
- To build and awareness of gender discrimination in families
- To empathize and see what it feels like to be a girl

Method

- Writing
- Drama
- Group discussion
- Critical dialogue with the whole group

Materials

- Paper, pencil

Duration

- 60 minutes

Activity

- Teacher should do a quick recap of the last session. Ask the students what they had done. If they had discussed their session with the girls and women at home. Have an informal discussion about this.

- She should then divide the class into groups of four. Tell them to do a short group enactment of girls' lives based on their previous discussions and their conversations at home. They should then present these to the whole class one by one, so that everyone can see their presentations. Teacher can ask only descriptive clarifying kinds of questions, just so that everyone is clear about what is being presented.
- Teacher should then bring them back to the culture circle. She should ask them to imagine for a moment what it is like to be a girl. To feel it. Do a mindfulness exercise for a few minutes, so that all the boys are encouraged to get into girls' skins so to speak. Tell them to shut their eyes and imagine that they are inside girls' skin, minds, and hearts. They live their lives. How do they feel?
- Teacher should then ask them to write down briefly what they felt. To describe in writing what their lives would be, keeping in mind what their sisters' lives are like.
- Then encourage them to share what they have written, imagined, or thought. Some of the responses might be like the ones in our class. For example:

S1: If I were a girl, I'd be made to do all household chores, I wouldn't have a say in the decisions of my life. I would be married off at an early age and would be dependent on someone or the other. I would have been forbidden to go out or wear short clothes.

S2: If I were a girl, my life wouldn't have been pleasant as I would not be allowed to go out and play, and be married off early, and sent to live in another house.

T: Out of all the points we discussed - Doing household chores, forbidden outings, early marriage, lack of freedom, does anyone have any new point?

S3: We would have been forbidden to have a career or job.

- Teacher should facilitate the discussion and ask probing and scaffolding questions all along. She should also make her own comments like: ***"Imagine getting up before anyone in the family, I used to have to do this. My father said I had to wake up at 6am and make tea for all of them. He said it was training for my future role after my marriage. So imagine getting up early in the morning, cleaning, mopping, cooking for everyone, eating only after others have eaten and then going to school. Imagine doing all these things early in the morning, then doing all your school work in school, and then coming back and doing housework again. Sounds like an exhausting routine, don't you think? I would be exhausted, wouldn't you? Not just that, have you heard parents telling girls that their school work is important and they should be concentrating on their studies? I know girls who have to study for their tests in school, because at home no one gives them any time off of their chores."***

S: Parents tell boys to study all the time.

T: Why don't they tell girls?

S: Because they think it is more important for boys, they have to get jobs, provide for families, take care of their old parents, girls just get married, and go to someone else's home.

T: But I know many girls who are providing for their families, Moni didi, Kuntididi. Sunitadidi's father left her, so her mother has been providing for them for years. Many of your mothers, too. Those of you who don't have dads at home. No? So then, how does that argument work?"

- Teacher then moves the boys back into their groups and asks them to discuss and list what they think are the differences between boys' lives and girls' lives. What kind of advantages do boys have over girls and vice versa?
- After the small group discussion, there should be a whole class sharing.
- The boys should then be asked to come up with a common list on the blackboard or chart paper
- In the column about the advantage of being a girl the boys might list: doesn't have to worry about providing for the family, girls get taken care of all their lives, they don't have to earn a living, and they don't have to face all of the problems and dangers in the outside world, which boys have to face.
- The teacher should deal with each of these and point out how most of these 'advantages' are actually inaccurate. For example, many of their mothers have to work, face sexual harassment in the work place, etc. Also, it is a good thing for everyone to work for a living and girls should share the burden of providing for their families. Boys should share the burden of domestic work and child rearing. Teacher should be trying to point out that actually all the so called advantages actually circumscribe and limit girls lives, leaving them powerless, dependent, and therefore easy to exploit.

Homework

Ask the boys to discuss the list they have developed with their sisters and see what they say. Tell them to listen to how they feel about their "advantages" and "disadvantages."

Lesson 9 | Discriminatory social norms

Objective

- To raise boys' awareness of the differential social norms for boys and girls
- To help them understand how discriminatory these double standards are
- To help them see how they harm and circumscribe girls' lives
- To build boys' empathetic awareness about gender discrimination in society

Method

- Critical dialogues in small groups and whole class
- Drama: Role reversal

Materials

- Paper and pencil, some easily available props

Duration

- 60minutes

Activity

- Teacher should use all the points of discussion from previous sessions to contextualise the present discussion. She should talk to the boys about the different social norms for appropriate conduct for girls and boys, asking them to think about the question, “what is considered right and wrong for girls to do and what are some differences between what is considered right and wrong for boys?” or “what do their families allow or forbid them from doing?” For example: we saw in an earlier discussion that girls aren’t allowed to go out and play in the evenings, while boys are allowed to go. Or it’s considered okay for boys to go out and play in the evenings, while girls have to stay at home and cook, or take care of the younger children. Boys aren’t expected to stay at home and do the housework or take care of the younger babies. After a general discussion, she should break them up into smaller groups and ask them to discuss this amongst themselves and make a list of differences.
- After they make the list, the teacher should ask the boys to present their lists to the whole class. Once all the lists are presented, the teacher should conduct a whole class discussion on each of the points brought out by the boys themselves. The lists might include things like the following:
 - Girls are supposed to be more docile, while boys are supposed to be strong and assertive.
 - Girls are supposed to be modest, dress modestly, speak softly, not laugh out loud. There are no such restrictions on boys.
 - Girls can’t be seen roaming around on streets. It’s not safe and it’s not considered proper.
 - If girls are seen talking to boys, it reflects poorly on her character, but there aren’t such stringent conditions for boys.
 - Girls are supposed to be good at housework, they are supposed to do it in their parents’ home and in their in-laws home while boys are supposed to work outside.
 - It’s not right for a girl to approach a boy or hold his hand; whereas it’s okay for boys and even when they engage in harassment on the streets it’s not taken very seriously—it’s viewed tolerantly—“boys will be boys.” Boys are almost expected to make aggressive sexual advances at girls.
 - The sexual norms for girls are much stricter than for boys. It’s just not appropriate for her to roam around with a boy before she is married. It is not so strict for boys.
 - Girls are seen as guests in their parents’ homes, only waiting to be sent off to their husbands’ homes. They have to leave their homes while the boys do not.
 - Girls face harassment from in-laws and boys don’t.
 - Girls have to be given dowries when they marry, and boys do not, which is one of the reasons that they are considered burdens.
 - Girls don’t get their parents wealth, boys do, because they are still considered as part of another family after marriage.
 - Marriage is more important for girls than boys.
 - A boy’s birth is celebrated much more than a girl’s.

- Girls have to seek permission from others all their lives, first their parents and brothers, then husbands, and sons. Boys can take charge of their lives when they grow up. They are expected to.
 - Girls have to be protected all their lives – boys have to do the protecting.
 - Girls who are very independent in thought and manner are not considered ‘good’ while boys are expected to be independent.
 - Girls can tolerate more pain, because they have babies.
 - It’s totally inappropriate for girls and women to talk back to their brothers or parents and it’s more acceptable for boys.
 - It’s not appropriate for women to hit their husbands, but when men do that or are verbally abusive to their wives, it is more acceptable.
 - It’s not customary for a woman to be more educated than her husband or brother
 - Girls’ education is not as important as boys’ education.
 - Girls are supposed to be pretty while boys are supposed to be manly and their worth is more tied to their earning capacity.
 - Girls’ honour (“izzat”) and respect is very tied to her sexual chastity and modesty; this isn’t true for boys. They are respected for their work and earning capacity.
 - A girl’s “bad” actions (errant sexual behaviour) bring dishonour to the whole family. Her respect/honour is located very much in her body. It also seems as though her family and her community own her body in a way. They decide what she should do with it.
 - A girl has little control over her body or her life; her husband decides when to have sex and how many children they will have.
 - Most girls can’t think of having careers; marriage, having babies, housework, and caring for the family is their predestined career. Boys are more free to choose what they will do with their lives.
 - Girls are expected to live their lives in the house, even if they don’t want to; boys are expected to deal with the outside world.
 - Girls are expected to restrict their socializing to their families and husband, especially after they are married, while men are free to socialize as much as they want.
 - Girls have much less freedom of choice and mobility than boys.
 - A free thinking and freedom loving girl is considered almost dangerous, whereas such thinking is commended in boys, especially rich boys.
- The teacher should try to have as comprehensive a list as possible. This exercise should take as long as it needs and boys should be allowed to discuss each point amongst themselves. Teacher should allow a free-flowing discussion amongst them. There will probably be opposing points of view too. Teacher should allow the boys to debate the issues and arrive at their own conclusions, making minimal but strategic interventions. For example:

S1: Girls face more harassment at home, first parents, then in-laws.

S2: Boys face it too when they go out, they get harassed at work, by other men.

T: You mean that you are harassed outside and girls at home?

S2: Actually, they are safer at home.

S1: No, they are not. They get harassed continuously by their mothers-in-law and beaten by their husbands when they get drunk.

S2: Actually, we keep girls at home to protect them and boys are sent out to do the shopping and other chores and there they face other dangers. So, saying that only girls are harassed isn't fair.

S1: So, who do they need protection from? Boys only.

- After the points are all listed on the board. The teacher should take each point and have a detailed discussion – particularly those that have not been discussed much in the earlier discussion. She should help see how unfair social norms are to girls. She should also help them look for underlying causes of the norms and also see that they are not natural or “God given.” They are manmade and can be changed. This will take time and the teacher might need to spend a few sessions on this and take each point separately.

Homework

Use the list we have made together and discuss it with your sisters. See how they feel about the double standards that society has. Write a short report about their responses.

Lesson 10 | Discriminatory social standards continued: “Natural differences” between boys and girls

Objective

- To continue the discussion on the differential norms for boys and girls and the resulting differential treatment
- To help boys understand that the differences which they think are “natural” or biological are really not so natural, but socially constructed
- To help boys understand empathetically that the differential treatment is discriminatory and has a harmful effect on girls

Method

- Critical dialogues
- Drama: Role reversal

Duration

- 60 minutes

Activity

- Teacher should get all the boys in a circle and do a quick recap of the last session. She should ask them about their homework and ask them what their sisters' responses were. How did they say they felt about the double standards? After a few responses, she should ask them to dramatize their feelings in the form of a still image. Pretend you are a girl/your sister and show us how you feel about being sent away from home, having no freedom, no voice, or no choice. Do a few rounds of this using different aspects of discrimination.
- Teacher should then begin the critical dialogue on "natural" differences. Ask them what they think are "natural" differences. The responses might include the following:
 - Girls are good at doing household chores, boys aren't
 - Girls are weaker than boys, so need protection
 - Girls are better at child care, because they bear children
 - Girls are naturally more vain than boys
 - Girls are naturally more emotional than boys; they cry, boys don't
 - Girls don't fight, boys do
 - Girls are naturally the honor of the family, boys are the identity of the family
 - Girls have to necessarily go to their husbands' home
- Teacher should discuss each one of their conceptions and try to de naturalize them. For example:

S1: If we fall and get hurt, a girl will cry, a boy won't.

T: But I've seen boys cry.

S1: Little boys cry, not big ones.

S2: Boys are told not to cry like a girl from childhood, so they learn to control it.

T: So, it isn't natural, right? But tell me, what's the harm in crying when you are in pain?

S1: People will make fun of you if you do that.

S2: Boy's ego will get hurt if people say you are crying like a girl.

T: Why is that? It's quite normal to cry when you are in pain? And why does our ego get hurt when someone says we are doing something like a girl? Does a girl's ego get hurt when she is told she is behaving like a boy?

S1: No not her ego, but she will feel it is not a compliment. It means she's not normal but strange.

T: Yes – but if both boys and girls do sometimes behave like each other, then there's no "natural" way of behaving, right? It's all taught to us. And actually tell me, don't you feel like crying some times? I do. Let's see when do we feel like crying but don't because someone will laugh at us? Everyone tell me one such incident. Let me share mine first....

- Teacher should try and show how this is a socially learned trait and not a natural one. He can also discuss the "ego" issue raised by the student, pointing out that there seems to be an implicit hierarchy in behaving like a girl or a boy. A boy acting like a girl is an inferior thing to do. Help them question this proposition.

- Teacher should do the same thing about household chores like cooking and sweeping. Point out that the best chefs in the world are men and get paid a lot. Also in the local restaurants, who is the cook? Who is the waiter? Who cleans the place and the dishes? Why aren't women doing those jobs if they are naturally good at them? So clearly it isn't a "natural" thing. Point out that men do those jobs when they get paid to do them but don't do them at home, because they have unpaid women to do them. They also somehow think it is beneath their dignity to do that work at home. Why is that? How does it restrict girls' lives?
- Teacher can do a role reversal drama exercise with the boys. Break them into groups and tell them to imagine that they are in a world where the conventional standards are reversed with boys being expected to conform to the roles that girls are traditionally given in our society. They cook, can't go out, take care of babies, have to listen to the men at home, have to be submissive, etc. Tell them to devise short plays showing this. A day in the life of a boy in this new universe. Ask them to present their plays to the whole group.
- Ask them how they felt. What were their lives like? Did they like their lives? Why not? So this is how girls feel. Are these standards fair to girls?
- If differences aren't natural, then society need not have these standards. Aren't they a way of keeping men in power and maintaining the inequality?
- How might we work at having more equal standards?
- Teacher should take all the differences mentioned above one at a time and discuss them at length, similarly, over 3-4 sessions. Drama is very effective in getting boys to empathize. Teacher should use examples of men who are different and who are happily egalitarian in the way that they behave and treat women. They work at home, cook and clean, are very nurturing fathers, cry when they feel like it, and don't feel like they are inferior men.
- It is important to emphasize throughout the discussions how this will make their own lives better, too.
- Ask them to imagine a world in which boys and girls share domestic work and do paid work outside too. Won't it result in increased income and increased leisure for the girls, too? Also, it will add to their skill sets. It will make them *more* independent, *more* competent. Their own lives will become less stressed as they begin to share the responsibility of providing for their families with their sisters and wives. Their children will love them more because they will be more hands-on care givers. They will also enjoy it more. Children can be fun to raise. Male teachers can use themselves and their own experience as an example. Role play for this in class is also useful. Boys will laugh and be uncomfortable at first, and they should be allowed to find their comfort levels with the teachers' help. Male teachers should take the lead in this. The main idea to drive home is that this is not unnatural, it is not demeaning, not unmanly and that it can be fun and rewarding, especially child care.
- Teacher should point out that while cooking and cleaning outside is paid, at home it is unpaid, which is probably why it has less status at home. But the work is the same and equally important at home and outside. So there's no logical basis for thinking of it as inferior, demeaning, or unmanly.

T: We had discussed that a bad girl is one who doesn't do house work and a bad boy is one who doesn't work outside. What is the difference between house work and the work we do outside?

Boys: Household chores include cooking, sweeping, washing clothes, etc.

S1: Outside work is just the same, the only difference is that you get paid for it.

T: Do you all agree with this?

Boys: Yes, sir.

T: Have you ever been to a "dhaba (food joint on highway)?"

Boys: Yes, sir.

T: Who cooks in a "dhaba?"

Boys: The chef.

T: Is he a man or a woman?

Boys: A man.

T: You must have seen the roads or gutters being cleaned, who cleans them?

Boys: A man.

T: What about laundry, who does that outside?

Boys: A man.

T: So all these kind of work are being done by men outside, so why are women doing them in the house?

S: All of this work are done better outside than at home. Like food outside is tastier.

S: No, it's the other way around.

T: See, if the same work is done outside then you will get paid for it, but not at home. But, outside only men are doing it and at home only women.

T: Your father goes to work, you go to school, and your mother does household chores. If for some reason your mother stops doing that, then how will you and your father be affected?

S1: The children won't be able to go to school and father's work will be of no use. The house will be dirty. Nobody will get food.

T: If you don't get food, then will you be able to work?

Boys: No.

T: If the sheets haven't been changed for a month, then will you be able to sleep?

Boys: No.

T: How many of you have seen men who work at home, cooking, cleaning, etc.?

S: No one, sir.

S: My brother-in-law does help at home.

S: My father also.

T: That's very good. A major quality of a good man that we had listed was that he helps at home. The teacher with the boys tries to calculate the approximate monetary value of household work. They calculate it to be Rs. 7000.

T: No matter if you earn Rs. 2000 or Rs. 20,000, work worth Rs. 7000 is happening in everyone's house. Whoever does that much work should be paid at least Rs. 7000.

T: The person who is working at home, does that person's work have any value?

S2: No.

T: Why not?

S2: Because that person is not earning anything.

T: What if you have to live alone and do all the house work? Will you be to do it?

S: Yes, sir.

S: Yes, it can be done.

T: It will be very difficult. You will not be able to feed yourself properly and as a result you will fall behind physically. You will start eating out and that food is not healthy. So, this house work is very valuable, maybe even more valuable than the amount of money that is coming in the house.

Homework

Think about “natural” differences again and write a short report about what you think about them now. Is it really so bad to do some of the “naturally” girlish things, like housework, crying when in pain, etc?

Lesson 11 | Masculinity and violence

Objective

- Helping boys understand that men are not “naturally” violent
- Helping them understand that making a violent response to all conflict is a socially learned behavior
- Helping them see that everyone loses in this case and that there are other less violent ways of responding

Method

- Critical dialogue
- Story completion
- Drama

Materials

- Incomplete story scenarios

Duration

- 60 minutes

Activity

- Get boys in a circle and do a recap of the last session. Ask the boys to share what emerged from their discussions with their sisters and mothers. Some of them might say that their mothers were resistant to the idea of boys doing housework. Spend some time in discussing this and ask

them how they would convince their mothers. They could elicit some help from their sisters, too. This is a good opportunity to impress upon the boys that both men and women are conditioned by patriarchal social norms and both need deconditioning. Boys can be agents of this change in their own homes. Once again emphasise how *everyone's* life will get better if boys and girls both share domestic and income generating responsibilities. It is better to emphasise what boys will gain rather than talking about the loss of power and privilege.

- Teacher should take up the point from the previous session about boys being "naturally" more violent than girls. Divide the boys into groups and give each of them one incomplete story scenario from the ones suggested below. The teacher can make up her/his own according to their context.

Scenario one:

- Surinder used to sit on same seat everyday in his class. After summer holidays, he entered the class and a newly admitted boy was sitting on his seat. He walks upto him and...

Scenario two:

- Mukesh loved playing cricket. He was very proud of his cricket bat. He was the only boy in colony who had a bat. It was an old bat that he had gotten from a cousin. One day while playing, its handle got loose and came out when Anand was batting. Mukesh walked up to him and...

Scenario three:

- Sohail used to go to school on his bicycle everyday. One day in recess time he found Rahul sitting and eating food on his bicycle...

Scenario four:

- Vinay goes to same school where his father works as a sweeper. He often saw an older boy harassing his father and making fun of him. One day, he decided to do something about it. He approaches the boy and...
- Ask the groups to finish the stories in their groups, showing what would normally occur in these situations. Tell them not to make it an ideal situation. Just a normal, everyday one. How do boys and men normally react?
- Tell them to act out their story in front of the whole group after they have devised it. Then discuss the completed stories with the whole group. The action is normally a violent one. Ask them the following questions:
 - Ask them to come up with other similar incidents from their own lives in school, outside school, and at home.

- What are some issues over which boys fight with other boys and men—caste, girls, religion, property. etc.
- Why is that a boy's normal reaction to a conflict situation?
- Might it be because somehow a boy's "masculinity" is tied up in how strong and powerful a boy is? And violence shows strength and power? So, a boy has to prove his masculinity by a violent response and, of course, hopefully by winning over his opponent. Is this a result of socialization again?

T: So, all this violence, like first you go and beat up someone, then they beat you. Then you take another friend along to beat him up, then you slap him, you fight. Why do you do this? Is this to solve any problem?

S: No, it's just boasting, a show of power.

T: When we take someone along with us to beat him up, we know that this is not going to solve the problem. What is it that we are trying to achieve? One is to prove that we are more powerful. But then he can bring three boys along with him next time.

S: Then they will take four boys from their side.

T: So, how is this a sensible thing to do?

S: It's not sensible, it's just foolishness.

T: So, we all can probably see that it's a foolish thing to do but still we are doing this.

Teacher asks them briefly how they feel when they are in middle of fight. They didn't respond much, but said that watching it is a lot of fun. Teacher then asks one particular usually quiet student if he has ever been in fights -

T: Shariful have you ever been in a fight?

S: Yes.

T: You beat up somebody?

S: Yes.

T: Who?

S: There were some boys behind my house who were playing cricket. The ball came inside my house, they asked for it and my sister returned. She asked them not to play there, so they started arguing with her. So, he said something wrong and my sister slapped him.

T: What was that wrong thing?

S: I don't know.

T: Still, tell us something.

S: He must have said something wrong that she slapped him. So he grabbed her arm. I was there only. So then I beat him up quite a lot.

T: And how old were you then?

S: It happened just recently.

T: And old was that boy?

S: Almost as old as me.

T: But was he taller and fatter than you?

S: No, he wasn't fat.

T: How was he then?

S: There were three or four boys, but he only was misbehaving.

T: But didn't they gang up on you and beat you?

S: No, no one else did anything because my sister was right there. I held his bat and beat him up.

T: His friends didn't try to help him?

S: No.

S2: It was that boy's mistake only.

S3: And Shariful's house was right there.

S2: Even a dog acts like a lion in his alley!

T: So, he just shared an incident where he got really angry and violent. Would anyone else like to share?

Asking Shubham if he fights with other boys often –

T: You must have beaten someone sometime?

S: Yes, I have but . . .

T: What was the reason?

S: Back in school I used to beat everyone up.

T: Why?

S: Just like that.

T: In which grade?

S: Sixth grade.

T: Who did you beat up, students of fifth grade?

S: No, those who were as old as me.

T: But why did you do that?

S: Suppose if I asked someone to give me something and he didn't, so...

Shubham's comfort with how he used to beat up other kids made me talk about "big" guys!

T: Big guys are more violent as they are more capable of beating up others. If a small guy beats up a big guy then how do we react? We laugh at him. First, we think that this is not possible. Why does it make us laugh?

S: Because the other guy is so big.

T: We feel that the big guy is going to be insulted so much. Even when in school the teacher beats a student who is bigger than him then it seems funny. Why is it so?

S: Because the big guy gets beaten up even though he is big. Nobody will respect him.

T: For boys or men getting beaten up is very insulting, right? They feel they have to do something otherwise nobody will respect them. Half the fights are happening because nobody can accept being beaten up. So when do we get to know this? When we are little, our parents beat us. But later we realize that it's very insulting.

S: Getting beaten up by parents is different than being beaten up by an outsider.

T: But still how do you get to know that it's a very bad thing to get beaten up and that nobody will respect you after that?

S: As we grow and become more sensible we get to know that.

T: But don't they say, "See, he got beat up!"

S2: Yes, they tease you.

T: So, we are not solving any problem by being violent, we know that. Most of the violence is only to maintain one's dignity.

So, most of the violence is maybe related to power. Powerful man is more violent and we do violence to stay in power. And power is related to masculinity. It means to be powerful, to boss others, to be a man. Do we get power just by being a man? No. We are always trying to get that power. So, one way to understand masculinity is that it's the desire for power. So, we get violent just to attain that power. This is the relation between violence and masculinity. Only men are involved in street fights because only men are told that it's disrespectful to get beaten up. Women are not told any such thing. So, women don't feel the need to boss or bully someone all the time. Society pressurizes boys to do this. Have you ever felt this pressure? You know that getting in a fight and taking a friend to beat up someone is foolish. But, still we have this pressure to do all this because if we don't, then peers won't respect us. I don't know if you've ever talked about domestic

violence. But how will they look at a man whose wife beats him? He won't be respected. So, to maintain his dignity and honor he is obliged to dominate his wife. They say, "Keep your wife in control." So, if you're a man, you spend all your life in this power struggle. Just fight with each other to prove who is more powerful. So, it's important to understand this link between masculinity and power.

So, fights don't solve anything, it's just that for some time one has more power than the other. We know that it's for some time only, soon someone will come and beat us and again the struggle to get that power back will start.

So, men are trying all the time to be a man by dominating his wife, by fighting on the street, etc. We will talk more on this in sessions ahead. We will talk about violence, other facets of masculinity. One aspect is to show that you have more power, other aspect is to have control. We have to tell others what to do rather than the other way around. This is related to power relations. Power is a factor in every relationship. But this power is not always wrong. It can be used in a good way. Ma'am here has more than you, so she can use it to teach you something. She is older and more educated than you. So, in its own this power is not a bad thing. In power relation between man and woman, if man has power then it's not necessary that it is used to suppress women. This advantage can also be used to empower the other person.

Another kind of pressure that I remembered from Shariful's incident is when someone harms our family members we are expected to do something about it. If we don't do anything then this raises questions on our masculinity. Even when we know we will get beaten up, still we accept that and get into a fight. So here, masculinity is making us do something in a different way. If it was not such a big thing, "being a man," then probably we wouldn't have had to do all this. So, think more on it and try to give examples. Shariful's example helped us to understand some things. Give us examples where you saw someone you know who got violent to prove his manhood. Start noticing all this in your own lives.

- Teacher should point out that there are pacifist boys, who are naturally not so violent. How do they react? What do others call them? Discuss words like – "sissy", "wimp" etc. How do boys feel about this? And why are these valid? Some of these pacifist boys are good at many things, are also strong-willed and decisive. They aren't violent, but are still strong.
- Teacher should also point out that normally in these situations, no one really gains. Sometimes the consequences are pretty serious, ending up in criminal prosecution, jail etc. Also, sometimes long enmities are built, resulting in more of the same. We often have reason to regret our actions.
- Ask the boys to get back in their groups and rewrite the same story with a non-violent response. Act this one out in front of the whole group.
- Discuss this new outcome. Ask them if the violent response is better. Why? And if the other response is better then why? Is it "unnatural"? What are some other ways of showing your strength and power? What about negotiating power and skill, is that also a sign of strength? Isn't the other response more effective in the long term?

- Teacher should point out how much larger and more serious conflicts like war, riots, murder, etc. are simply a more magnified version of these “fights”. Do we like a society with all these conflicts? Are they “natural”?
- The teacher should continuously emphasize that male violence is a learned response and can be unlearned. Other less violent solutions to conflict are more effective and better for everyone. Teacher should get the boys to think of alternatives and make them act these out. This issue should be discussed repeatedly in other sessions, too.

Homework

Write a story about an incident from your life when there was a violent conflict. Think about another non-violent solution and rewrite that incident from this perspective.

Lessons 12 and 13 | Masculinity and violence: Focus on different types of violence – gender-based violence

Objective

- To help boys think of violence more deeply
- To understand that there is violence against oneself, against others and against a group
- To begin talking about male violence against women—domestic and street violence

Method

- Critical dialogues
- Story-making
- Pictures, collage making, and drawing

Materials

- Magazines, newspapers, colored pencils and markers, chart paper, scissors, and glue

Duration

- 2 sessions of 60 minutes each

Activity

- Put the boys in a group and, using the ball game, ask them to tell the group, one thing they remember from the last session. Try to use only one sentence.
- Put them in small groups and ask them to share the stories they have written for homework. Tell them to discuss the incidents and the new non-violent solutions found. How realistic were

these? If not, then why not? Were they more desirable? If yes, then what can we do to make them happen?

- After the small group discussion let them share some of the key points in the whole group.
- Teacher should give them as much time as they need to discuss this, as it is very important for them to work at deconstructing their notion of the “innate” violence of men.
- Teacher should put the students back in their groups. Give two groups magazines and newspapers to the other two. Give them all chart paper, coloring pencils and markers, scissors, and glue.
- Ask the groups with the newspapers to read some of the reports of violence in the papers. Ask these groups to cut those out and make a collage of the different reports of violence. Give a caption under each, like a headline. Make a simple drawing for each.
- Ask the other two groups to use the magazines to make a collage of different incidents of violence. They can draw around the pictures, make it into a story. They can also simply use drawing instead of making a collage. They should take up at least two-three incidents.

These 2 activities will probably take up the entire one hour. So it should be continued in the next session.

- Ask the students to complete their collages/drawings and to present them to the whole group.
- After each group has presented, the teacher should get the class to come up with a definition of violence. After they have all contributed to the formulation of a collective definition of violence, she or he can share the definition given by World Health Organization – “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or ‘against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal development or deprivation.’” She could also add emotional or psychological force here.
- Teacher should then use their collages and drawings to point out the different types of violence. Tell them there are three broad categories generally used
 - Violence against others** (there will probably be reports of murder, theft, street violence against girls, rape)
 - Violence against oneself** (there maybe reports of suicide; it is likely that there will not be too many in this category)
 - Violence against a group** (there maybe reports of riots, war, and terrorist activity)
- Teacher should draw three columns on the board and ask the groups to see under which category their representations fit.
- If there is no incident of violence against oneself, teacher can provide some. Girls burning themselves, students—boys and girls—committing suicide, farmers committing suicide, etc.
- Teacher should discuss all the incidents of violence presented by the students. Asking the following questions:
 - Who is being violated?
 - Who is doing the violence?

-What is the relationship between the two parties? Is it a power relationship—i.e., class/caste/gender/minority religion versus majority religion? Is it a domestic relationship—also power based?

- Is there an acceptance of this form of violence?

-Where has this acceptance come from?

- This is a good lead in to gender-based violence. Pick out the examples of gender-based violence – domestic and street violence and begin a discussion about these. Ask the same questions given above about each. Ask the boys to think of more examples that are only gender-based, e.g.: husbands beating their wives; brothers beating their sisters; in-laws harassing their daughters-in-law; sexual molestation at home; abusive behavior against girls and women at home; street violence against girls—rape; molestation; female foeticide; female infanticide; honor killings; girls burning themselves or being burned by their in-laws; neglect and deprivation at home are also instances of gender-based violence. Let them list out as many instances as possible.
- Encourage the boys to give these instances from their own lives, families and experience. Let them tell the class stories of sisters, aunts, cousins. Teacher should also share stories from her/his own life, family, and circle of acquaintances.
- Help them to see that a lot of this gender-based violence happens within the “safe” confines of the home. Help them see that girls are supposedly and professedly kept at home for “protection” because they are not safe on the streets—but they are not so safe at home either, actually even less safe. So girls aren’t safe in the womb, at home, or on the street!
- Teacher can share some statistics related to violence against women with the boys – for shock value, to get boys to see how extensive and widespread gender-based violence is.

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ India was ranked 141 out of 144 countries for survival of women.¹⁸▪ 1 million girls in India are killed in the womb as a result of sex selective abortions.¹⁹▪ National crime reports say that nationally 848 women are sexually harassed, raped, or killed every day.²⁰▪ In India girls between one and five years of age are more likely to die than boys the same age because of poor nutrition, female infanticide, and sheer neglect.²¹ |
|---|

- Teacher can also lead the boys to see how there are many emotional and psychological forms of violence against girls and women in the home, too. Let the boys come to this themselves, lead gently by the teacher.
- The goal of this session is to make boys aware of the extent of gender-based violence and let them think about it. The discussion about structural causes should be taken up in the next session

¹⁸Global Gender Gap Index 2017, World Economic Forum.

¹⁹Rita Banerji, "Female Genocide in India: And the 50 Million Missing Campaign," *Intersections: Journal of Gender and Sexuality in Asia and The Pacific*, vol. 22 (2009).

²⁰Quoted in Indrani Basu, "848 Indian Women Are Harassed, Raped, Killed Every Day," *The Huffington Post*, December 16, 2014 (www.huffingtonpost.in/2014/12/16/crime-against-women-india_n_6330736.html).

²¹International Institute for Population Sciences, *India National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3), 2005-06*, vol. 1 (Mumbai: International Institute for Population Sciences, 2007), p. xxxv.

Homework

Discuss this session with your sister and mother and together make a list of all the different forms of violence girls and women face in their lives—before birth and at birth, during childhood, adolescence, and adulthood, – after marriage, and as an old woman. Ask them to describe instances from their own life and from the lives of the other women they know or are related to according to these categories. Make a list accordingly.

Lesson 14 | Gender-based violence in our lives

Objective

- To help the boys become more aware of gender-based violence around them
- To help them become aware of how it is an everyday part of their lives
- To help them understand empathetically how women feel about this
- To help them understand the underlying structural causes of this gender-based violence

Method

- Critical dialogues in small groups and in a large group
- Collage making

Materials

- Lists developed over homework
- Magazines, newspaper clippings of gender-based violence, chart paper, scissors, glue, colored pencils and markers

Duration

- 2 sessions of 60 minutes each

Activity

- Get boys in a group and do a brief recap about last session. Ask them what they remember of the session.
- Play the ball game. Ask them to think of the discussion they had with their sisters and mothers at home, and the lists they made. What did they learn? Tell them that when you throw the ball at them they should tell the group of one kind of violence that girls face before and after birth; then one kind that they face during childhood, then adolescence, adulthood, marriage and then old age. Teacher should name the categories and get students to give the responses. Keep playing till all the categories are covered. If boys want to tell a story along with naming the kind of violence, teacher should let them.

- After the game. Teacher should divide the boys in small groups and ask them to share the lists they have developed for homework. Tell them to develop a group list. Make a table on the board and ask them to make a similar table for each group. Do not enter the contents of the table yet.

Violence in women's life cycle		
Child and adolescent girl	Adult woman	Elderly woman
Physical torture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female infanticide • Beating • Deprivation of food, care, and medical services/facilities 	Physical torture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic violence • Harassment for dowry • Declaring as a witch and burning 	Physical torture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic violence
Psychological and emotional torture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced marriage • Keeping in isolation 	Psychological and emotional torture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced marriage • Not giving care • Denying of freedom of decisions, movement, etc. 	Psychological and emotional torture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not giving care • Rules related to widowhood • Lack of freedom
Sexual harassment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child marriage • Child sexual harassment • Child prostitution 	Sexual harassment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape within marriage and outside marriage • Forced sex work • Forced pregnancy • Sexual harassment in the work place • Sexual harassment in the family • Buying and selling for sex • Scaring and threatening sexually 	Sexual harassment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape • Scaring and threatening sexually • Sexual harassment
Behavior control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor education and health care and denial of access to information • Control of movement • Denial of access to resources and control of resources 	Behavior control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor education and health care and denial of access to information • Control of movement • Domestic labor without pay 	Behavior control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor health care and denial of access to information • Control of movement • Domestic labor without pay

- Get them to present their tables to the whole group.
- Collectively make one class table using all the group tables. Make sure most of the contents from the table above are included in the class table.
- Teacher should make sure that boys are made aware that many of the forms of violence are specific to girls and women—for example: female foeticide, spousal violence, bride burning,

harassment by in-laws, street harassment, molestation, forceful prostitution, denial of freedom, restricted mobility, deprivation of education, etc.

- Ask them the following questions:
 - Where are girls and women completely safe from violence?
 - In which relationship are they completely safe from violence?
 - Which is a safe age for girls and women when there is no violence?
 - Who is the perpetrator of this violence?

Teacher must make boys understand how violent girls' lives are. Though men are the main perpetrators, women also violate women. Try to point out that actually it is structural violence. The social structure seems to sanction many of these acts of violence.

- Put boys in groups and give them magazines and newspaper clippings. Tell them to make group collages about gender-based violence. Use the newspaper clippings and make a pictorial representation. Then tell them to draw bubbles and write girls' feelings about these acts of violence.
- Tell them to share their collages and drawings and to talk about them
- Teacher should use this session to begin a discussion on the underlying causes of these acts of violence.

Homework

Take your copy of the class table on gender-based violence home. Think about it. Ask yourself the question—"Why does this happen to girls in our society?" Put your answers next to the act of violence in your table.

Lesson 15 | Why are girls' lives so violent?

Objective

- To help boys gain a structural understanding of violence against women
- To help them see that structural violence is very unfair
- To help them imagine a less violent world for girls and women
- To help them think of ways in which boys and men can help to change this. What needs to change? How do boys need to change?
- To help them see that it does not make them less "manly" and that manhood can be construed differently from the conventional powerful, strong, dominant, violent conception of it.

Method

- Critical dialogues in small groups and in a whole class format
- Reflective writing

- Drama

Duration

- 3-4 sessions of 60 minutes each

Activity

- Teacher should get the boys in a circle. Using the ball she should ask them to recap some of the issues discussed in the last session. What did they learn about the kinds of violence girls experience at different stages of their lives.
- Put boys in 4 small groups and ask them to discuss their homework. What have they learned about why girls' lives are so violent? What are the causes? Ask 2 groups to think of the first stage in their table—child and adolescent girl—and the other 2 groups to think of the adult woman. Tell them to make a note of the outcome of their discussion.
- Teacher should do a very brief preliminary discussion with the whole class to start them off. Ask boys to tell the whole class what they came up with from the previous lesson's homework. Just a couple answers are enough as a warm up to lead into the small group discussions.
- After 15-20 minutes, ask the boys to present their group report to the whole class.
- Many reasons will come up. For example: girls are killed in the womb because everyone wants a son. Girls aren't given enough care after birth because boys are considered more valuable. Girls are married off early because they are considered burdens, etc.
- Let each group present their reports before beginning the discussion.
- Take just one issue—female foeticide/infanticide. Discuss the causes in detail. For example:
 - *Why are boys considered more valuable?*
 - *Because they will carry the family name,*
 - *Will be the primary wage earners,*
 - *Will take care of their parents;*
 - *Girls have to be given dowries.*
 - *Girls have to be married off and then they will belong to another family who will benefit from their labor.*
- Teacher should probe each one of the above causes given above further. For example:
 - *Why do boys have to carry the family name? Why can't girls also carry it?*
 - *Because that is the social norm.*
 - *But there are many societies in which this is not the norm. Many girls carry their natal family names.*
- Teacher's goal should be to point out that social norms are not fixed in stone; they are not natural because they don't happen everywhere and can be changed.

T: Why are boys the primary wage earners?

S: Because that is a social norm. It is expected from boys and they are raised to believe they have to be. Girls will be married, have babies, and take care of their families and do all the work at home, while boys will grow up and earn money to take care of their families.

T: But aren't there many women who are the primary wage earners? I know many women, actually many of your mothers, who are raising their children on their own incomes either because their husbands have left them, or because their husbands are drinking, or because their husbands are dead.

- Teacher should drive this point home by giving many live examples from the class, from her own life, and even public figures. Her goal should be to show that this is a myth. She should also try to show that it is not a fair social norm. It leaves girls at a severe disadvantage, because (A) child care and housework is not paid, while work outside is paid. As a result, men have more control over economic resources; girls are left completely dependent and powerless. (B) Girls are often denied an education because it is considered that an education is not necessary for child bearing, child rearing, and domestic work. (C) Girls lives are severely circumscribed and their worlds limited to the confines of the home. (D) Girls are denied intellectual growth and access to the outside world, world knowledge, and many opportunities. We can see from real life examples of many women that they are certainly capable, but are denied the opportunity. (E) Girls are denied a choice; their future is decided for them. Boys are also denied a choice; they carry an extra burden.

S: But aren't girls naturally suited to child rearing, child care, and also domestic work, because they bear babies and so are the natural care givers?

- Teacher should point out that this not the case. Even though biologically only women can give birth, once the baby is born men can share child rearing, too. Increasingly many men are doing so. Give real life examples of men in India and abroad. And actually many men are enjoying doing this. Nurturing a baby is a very fulfilling experience. Men should not be denied this—don't they like holding their baby brothers and sisters? Tell the boys to try taking care of them, it will be fun.
- Teacher should remind them of the discussion they have had earlier about domestic work not being "natural" to either sex. Men work as chefs, waiters, and carers outside the home for money and do a very good job of it.
- Teacher should once again help the boys see that if housework and income generating work outside the home is shared by boys and girls, everyone's lives will be easier and better.
- Teacher should help boys see that the problem lies with the social structure or "samaj," which is so unfair to girls and women. The violence is a structural violence; it should and can be halted if everyone sees that it is unfair. The boys should see that by cooperating with social norms and perpetuating them, the structural violence will continue. In some way they are all responsible. Similarly, if they don't cooperate, then it will change. Give examples of social norms that have changed and how everyone has benefitted. For example, "sati" is an ancient practice where a

woman was burned alive on her husband's funeral pyre. It doesn't happen anymore, because someone—actually a man, Raja Ram Mohan Roy—saw that it was unfair and revolted. A law was made banning the practice. Can they imagine if their mothers or sisters had to be burned if their husbands died? Would that have been good?

- Likewise we have many laws that ban such unfair social practices. For example, a law against child marriage. Our constitution has also made the right to education a fundamental right of ALL—girls and boys. But child marriage still continues. Why does this happen?

- *Because girls are considered a burden*

- So let's discuss this more. Are they burdens?
- Teacher should point out how much work girls and women actually do and how indispensable that work is to everyone in the family. Even in cases where only the men earn, the family can't function without the work that their mothers and sisters do. Teacher can also help them put a monetary value to their work and show that actually it is very valuable work. So, far from being burdens, they are actually very productive contributors to the family's welfare.

Homework

Interview your mothers and see what their days are like. How much work do they do at home? Document this along with kind of work and the number of hours they spend caring for the family.

Lesson 16 | Why are girls' lives so violent? Marriage and child marriage

Objective

- To help boys see how the current norms that govern marriage are very disadvantageous to girls and render them very vulnerable to violence
- To discuss child marriage and understand how this is akin to girl slavery
- To deepen their understanding of how the social structure is severely discriminatory towards girls and how unfair it is to them

Method

- Critical dialogues in small groups and in the whole class format
- Reflective writing
- Improvised drama

Duration

- 2 sessions of 60 minutes each

Activity

- Teacher should get boys in a circle and, using the ball game, get the boys to recap what they learned in the last session. What is the one thing they remember about violence against girls and women?
- Teacher should then briefly discuss their homework. What did they learn about their mothers' schedules? How many hours did they work? How valuable was the work? Can the family do without their work? Some mothers probably work outside the home, too. So then does it look like these women are "burdens" of which their families needed to rid themselves?
- Teacher should then discuss the issue of marriage. Ask boys to give the definition of child marriage. Then ask them to relate instances of child marriage. Who do they know in their family or neighborhood who was married before 18? How many girls and how many boys? Ask some of them to tell you their stories. Teacher should share stories from her experience, too. After they have shared some stories, break them into groups and ask them to discuss the following questions (these should be derived collectively through a whole class discussion):
 - Did the girls or boys want to marry so early?
 - Were they asked?
 - What was life like for them after they were married?
 - Who was affected more?
 - What was life like for girls when they were married so early?
 - How old were they when they had babies?
 - Did they want to have so many babies?
 - How did this affect their health?
 - How much of their education had they finished?
 - How did the incomplete education affect their lives?
 - Did the girls have any voice at all in their marital homes?

Tell them to make a group report compiling all the answers to the above questions. They can add more questions if they come up during the discussion.

- Let the boys present their small group discussion reports to the whole class. Teacher should then compile a class report using all the group reports and then take up each point for discussion, helping boys understand how child marriage is akin to girl slavery—leaving her in sexual, physical and emotional bondage—and how her vulnerability to domestic violence multiplies. Use their stories and give examples of this. Can present general statistics, like those below, too.

- India has one-third of the world's 15 million or more child brides/slaves.²²

²²United Nations Children's Fund, *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and prospects* (New York: UNICEF, 2014), p. 1.

- One-third of girls in the developing world are married before the age of 18; 1 in 9 are married before the age of 15.²³
- Pregnancy is consistently among the leading causes of death for girls aged 15 to 19, worldwide.²⁴
- A study conducted by ICRW in two states in India found that girls who were married before 18 were twice as likely to report being beaten, slapped, or threatened by their husbands than girls who married later.²⁵

- Give examples of how girls and women die early because of early and multiple births. Do girls and women want to have so many babies? Point out the harm that a truncated education does and how it limits the possibilities of girls' lives. Give examples of child widows and their condition. Use the SavitribaiPhule play to contextualise this. Talk about young girls having sex before they are ready or even want to. Should they not have a choice here? Discuss how they have no choice in what is going to be a momentous change in their lives. How is all this fair? Why does it happen? Bring back the discussion of girls as "burdens"—another mouth to feed. How did girls feel about being sent away from their homes when they were so young?
- After the discussion ask boys to get back into their groups and devise small plays showing the plight of girls when they are married young.
- After their presentations, ask them how they think girls feel about their lives when they are married so young. How do they feel about being banished from their parents' homes?

Homework

Ask the boys to discuss the lesson with their mothers and sisters. If their mother was married early, they could ask her some of the questions they discussed in class. They should then write a reflective piece: "Pretend you are a girl and are married at 14. How do you feel?"

Lesson 17 | Violence against girls: Marriage and patrilocality

Objective

- To discuss marriage and to get them to see how even marriage of older women and men, because of its patriarchal structure, renders women powerless
- To discuss patrilocality and to help them see how it has a deep impact on girls' lives, leaving them at a grave disadvantage
- To help boys understand how vulnerable and homeless girls are rendered by patrilocality

²³www.icrw.org/child-marriage-facts-and-figures.

²⁴ibid.

²⁵ibid.

Method

- Critical dialogues in small groups and in whole class format
- Reflective writing
- Improvised drama

Duration

- 60 minutes

Activity

- Teacher gets all the boys in a circle and asks them to recap the last session's learnings. She should also ask them to share one thing that their mothers/sisters said when they discussed their lesson with them.
- Teacher should then break up the boys in small groups and ask them to share their homework with the group. Let them discuss this amongst themselves for a while.
- Teacher should then ask them to volunteer to read out their pieces to the whole class. Pick some points to discuss with the goal of building an empathetic understanding of girls' plight if they are married very young.
- Teacher should then ask them if they know people who were married after the legal age. What are their lives like? Were they consulted before they got married? How did their lives change after they were married?
- Teacher should ask them to get back in their groups and discuss how girls' and boys' lives change after they marry. What changes for each of them?
- When they share their discussion report in the whole class, teacher should pick up the points for discussion.
- The boys will point out that men have to become more responsible because now they also have to provide for their wife and family. They have to take on the additional "burden" of the wife! But now they have someone to take care of them, their food, clothes, etc. Parents also have someone to take care of them and do the housework.
- Teacher should discuss the boys' reference to the wife as a "burden," referring back to earlier sessions that showed how the wife more than pays for her keep with all the work she does. It's not fair to call her a burden.
- Teacher should focus on how girls' lives change after they are married with a special focus on patrilocality. The conversation might go something like this:

S1: After marriage the girl does her house work.

S2: Meaning Sasuralkakaam—her in-laws' house work.

....

S1: A girl's life after marriage: She has to take care of the house and the children. She has to work within the financial constraints of her in-laws.

T: Meaning?

S1: Now she has to live with what her in-laws give her.

- Teacher should get boys to see how girls have very little power in their married homes: no voice, no control over resources, no freedom of choice, and a lot of work. Why is this fair to them?
- Teacher should also take up the points about patrilocality that boys raise and show how this is a cruel system rendering them further powerless and homeless.

S2: After going to her in-laws she finds a new life.

T: What is that new life?

...

S3: If the girl gets to marry a boy she likes, then she will be happy. Then she will have more freedom to do things according to herself. If her parents marry her off forcefully then she will never find the courage to say what she wants, she is always afraid of her husband, she isn't able to do anything according to her wishes. She has to do what her in-laws say.

.....

S1: The girl is the honor of the house. She has to marry and go to another house one day. She knows that. She has to get married, no matter what.

T: What about the boy?

S2: After marriage she has to take care of her family; she has to take care of her children.

S3: She wants a husband who is like a friend to her.

S3: She leaves her own house and goes to someone else's house, and then she takes care of that like it's her own.

T: She treats that house as her own, is she doing that willingly or out of compulsion?

Students: Out of compulsion.

T: Can we really consider someone else's house as our own and take care of it?

S4: No, it takes months to consider it as your own.

S5: Initially she has no other choice but slowly she realizes she has to do this anyway so she starts to consider it as her own.

S6: If the husband and his mother are good people, then there is no compulsion. But if she is being made to work forcefully then she takes care of the house out of compulsion.

T: But how would it feel if someone suddenly tells you that this is your family now and you have to take care of it this way?

S6: Because she is told from childhood only that she has to go one day no matter what.

T: But how would it feel?

S1: She understands that from childhood that she has to go one day.

S6: But she must be feeling very sad when she actually goes.

T: Even before going. It is her house also but from childhood she is being told that it is not her house and that she has to go one day.

S6: It must feel very bad.

T: With what understanding does she grow up? Does the husband tell her that it's her house?

S6: Yes, he says that "From today it is your house only."

T: But don't they say that we will send you back to your house?

Students: Yes.

T: But she's not welcome in her parents' house either now, is she? So which one is her house?

S1: She gets stuck in the middle.

T: I think she is pretty homeless really.

S1: After marriage the burden on the girl increases day by day. She has to cook in the morning, get the kids ready for school, serve breakfast to the in-laws, and take care of them in every way.

- Teacher should try to get the boys to understand that even though a girl is conditioned to accept that her parents' home is not hers and that she has to leave and go to her in-laws' home, this is not a fair thing. She must try to show all the problems with that—how vulnerable she is in her new home, where often she knows no one because it's in another village or city. How insecure she feels and at their mercy. How her parents are reluctant to do much for her—educate her or spend too much on her because they know that she will belong to another family, so it seems like a lost investment. How parents have to pay a dowry because they think that her husband will provide for her, so they must compensate. How girls are denied a share in their natal home or parents' property for the same reason.
- Tell boys to imagine what it must feel like to be shipped off to a strangers' home in another village, left completely dependent on them. Female teachers can share how they felt if they are married. Let them do some improvised drama in groups to show what it is like and to show how girls feel. It is important to get boys to understand how girls feel. A role reversal would be useful to achieve this.
- Teacher must show how patrilocality leaves girls vulnerable to violence. Girls are more vulnerable to domestic violence because they are isolated from their own natal families. Dowry deaths, for example. Give further examples.
- Teacher must discuss the consequences of patrilocality in detail and also show that it is not a natural or essential condition. Patrilocality is not a necessary condition; there are societies where this doesn't happen. In other societies and in the cities here, both girl and boy move to another home of their own because they are adults and can manage their own lives. Give examples from your own experience and from theirs.
- But then who will look after old parents? Both can look after both sets of parents as and when the need arises.
- Allow boys to think of an alternative more fair, more egalitarian system of marriage which does not leave one party so much at a disadvantage.

Homework

Think of some alternative systems where marriage is more of an equal partnership with shared duties and responsibilities and where no one is left powerless and vulnerable. Write a short reflective report.

Lesson 18 | Violence against girls: Marriage and patrilocality, continued

Objective

- To help boys see the violence against women within marriage
- To help boys see that no one takes action because it has an unstated social sanction
- To get boys to see how unfair this is and to build up a sense of indignation against it, as well as a sense of urgency about taking action against it

Method

- Critical dialogue
- Story sharing

Materials

Stories to share

Duration

- 60 minutes

Activity

- Teacher asks boys to recap learnings from last session.
- She tells them this story from her own experience and asks them questions to guide the discussion.

T: I have an aunt, my mother's sister. Her husband used to beat her a lot. Over small, small things—if she hadn't cooked well, or wasn't at home when he returned, or he couldn't find the exact clothes he wanted to wear, etc. My aunt is well educated. She has a masters. Her husband used to beat his two children a lot too and used to abuse everyone verbally all the time. Life was hellish for all of them. But because there is a common belief in our society that "ladki ki doli jati hai aur arthi nikalti hai" (Once a girl leaves her parents home in her bridal palanquin, only her funeral procession should leave her in-laws' home). In short, there is no place at all for her in her parent's home anymore. She MUST stay in her husband's house, no matter what. Whatever the circumstances, it is very shameful for her to return, and quite unacceptable. Of course this was some years ago, but it still happens. So no one had the good sense to ask her to leave an abusive marriage and come back. Even her father who is an educated man didn't have the courage to do that. So she tolerated her abusive husband. She began to work to raise her children. But she continued to live in her hellish marriage, because society says you must never leave your husband.

- Teacher should get reactions from her students. She should ask the boys to share similar stories of violence from their own families or from their neighborhood. Then she should analyze it,

explaining how social norms surrounding marriage and patrilocality make marriage such a violent and unsafe institution for girls. Point out how unfair it is. The conversation should include issues of patriliney (family name being handed down from father to son), and dowry. The conversation may go something like this:

S1: Didi, when there's a fight and violence between husband and wife, can't we file a complaint [with the police]?

T: We can file a complaint.

S1: I have never seen anyone do it.

S2: Only if you have the courage.

T: Yes, people often don't do it. Why? Because it's the matter of household. So that the marriage doesn't break. What is this big deal about breaking a marriage, that because of it we keep on tolerating violence? Under the Domestic Violence Act, even violence is listed of many kinds. Not just physical violence. Emotional Violence. Telling the woman that you can't go anywhere, you will not talk to anyone.

S3: That you can't sit outside.

S1: But Didi if you are beating up your wife, if you are beating up your children, then the house is already broken!

T: Yes, this is what people don't realize.

S4: They don't want people to talk about internal matters!

T: That if you are beating up your family, then what sort of home is that!

S4: They know the girl hasn't done anything wrong.

T: So for society, you keep on maintaining the façade of a home.

S1: But why does the woman keep on tolerating?

S3: She doesn't tell anyone so that they don't get insulted in the society, and so that home doesn't break.

S1: This is no reason! If husband is beating up everyday, and if he is coming back drunk everyday, then. . .

T: She should leave. She should tell someone.

...

S1: She should tell her family members.

T: She is told from the beginning that her house is in-laws' house only. So her family members will tell her that only; that they can't do anything and your arthi only will leave that house. She needs at least someone's support.

S1: She can't do it alone.

T: Her brother might say that he has his own family to take care of and he can't accommodate her.

S1: It shouldn't be like this.

T: Yes, but this thinking of ours that once she is married, she belongs in that house, to that family and her husband owns her—this has many harmful effects. We can't do anything about abusive marriages because of this.

...

T: So think about the harmful effects of this kind of thinking. You should be able to explain it to someone who says things like these in front of you. We say things but we don't really understand what it means for someone else.

T: Another thing that we say often is that the wife is a "burden." Who has the right to call someone a burden all the time. Every time, the girl, wife, daughter is the burden.

S1: The boy is the burden.

T: Forget about who actually is the burden . . .

S1: No one is a burden.

T: Yes, it's a family after all. [But we always hear] girl is a burden, wife is a burden, daughter-in-law is a burden.

S1: This thinking is wrong.

S2: She is considered a burden because parents have to get her married.

S1: They have to give dowry.

T: Is she a burden because of dowry or we have to give dowry because we have assumed that she is a burden? What is the cause and what is the effect?

S2: They have assumed she is a burden.

S1: We have assumed that she is a burden right from the start.

S2: They give dowry and say, "take her away."

T: Yes, take our burden away and you can have some money for it. Imagine you grow up listening that you are a burden. All the time this happens. This must have happened with you also Ma'am?

T2: Yes, just two days back.

S2: What happened?

T2: My mother said, "We just want to get you married as soon as possible and get rid of a burden." I got angry, I said, "How am I burden? Look at my brother, I'm at least earning here, he is not."

S3: Till the dowry system is not eradicated completely, calling girls a "burden" won't stop.

...

T: When can we call boys a burden? Does a sister say that her brother is a burden, or a mother that her son is a burden?

S1: When he doesn't study or do any work at home.

T: Yes, but that is in extreme cases.

S1: When he doesn't earn anything.

T: Yes, when he is extremely lazy, doesn't do any work at all. A man who is drunk and does nothing for like five years, only then will he be considered a burden. But a girl is a burden even if she does everything.

S2: Right from childhood.

...

T: It's like people look at a girl and probably see a huge rock! This word "burden" is used so often around us, you must have heard it. It is used every day. We have to understand that we are affecting someone's life by talking like this. We are affecting our sisters when we call them a burden. See if there is a mother around you who is tolerating violence everyday because of this doli-arthi kind of thinking. So these things are very harmful.

...

T: Another thing I want to discuss is the necessity of marriage. Someone here had said that a girl has to get married; a boy can maybe do without it also. You had said that a girl has to get married eventually, how long will she stay at her father's place. Let us think about this also. We think that everyone has to get married eventually. It's like that only, the society tells us this only.

S1: To carry forward the family's lineage.

T: And whose lineage is this?

Students: Boy's.

T: This is what patriarchy is. It is meant to keep the power in the hands of men. Many tricks have been designed to maintain patriarchy. There is always a struggle involved to keep the power with oneself. The first trick is—there is no logic behind it—that the married couple will live in the boy's home. Why is this so? What's the logic behind it? This is not a natural thing.

S1: Some men also live with wife's family.

T: That is very rare. People will make fun of him. His masculinity will be questioned. So what is the logic behind this rule?

S2: That the man is stronger physically and mentally so stay at his house.

T: So what will that do?

S2: Didi this is not my opinion, I'm just saying this could be a reason.

T: Okay. What other reason could there be?

S1: So that his lineage continues...

...

T: So, one rule is about the location, the other is that the child will get the father's surname.

S1: Her family members only send her away, that is why they give dowry.

T: Yes, but they are forced by the society to do this. See, we are all just following the rules of the society. So, because the name is carried forward by a boy, whenever a girl is born parents will not like that. People think that she is not their family because she will not carry forward the name. Do people think their lineage or family has increased when a girl is born?

S1: They don't till now.

T: But isn't this surprising? Lineage means one more member in the family but nobody is happy to see a girl because this rule has been made that the family's name will be carried forward by the boy. People who have two or three girls will keep on having more till a boy is born. They start killing them because they have too many girls. So, one is location, the other is family's name. The third is property. See family name is different and property is different. Both family name and property are attached with the boy. They relate everything so much that we are not able to differentiate between them. If family name is passed on through the boy, then property could be passed on differently; from one girl to another. When she gets married she takes her property with her. This would solve the problem of this burden also. Why doesn't it happen like that?

S1: But there would be other members also in her family.

T: So, the daughter-in-law would bring her property with her. System can work either way. What do those parents do who only have daughters? Parents have their own property that is not going anywhere, you have to see who they give it to after they die.

S1: They could divide the property among their girls.

S2: If there's boy then they will give it to him, if there's a girl then they'll give it to the girl.

T: What if they have a boy and a girl, who will they give it to in that case?

Students: To the boy.

T: Why?

S1: Because he is the one who supports the family.

T: Girl also runs the house.

S2: It's not like that, Didi, some girls also support the family.

T: And what does our law have to say about this?

S3: Law says that both should get equally!

T: And how long did it take our legal system to realize that?

...

T: Our laws are nothing but a reflection of the society. If something is unjust and accepted in the society then it is many times there in the law also. It's not that the laws always do justice. So, this law about the property came in very late. Now they have realized that property should be equal. In 2005 this law came into effect. He was asking about laws relating to domestic violence. For so many years the law did not understand that . . .

S1: Now it has come into effect, but the girls before will not get justice.

T: Yes, but you can enact a law from a back date also.

S2: But there are many provisions for girls also in the law. Like, they get more money for education, since they don't get any property.

T: Who gives the money?

S2: I had heard an aunty talking about this near my house. She was saying that girls get more returns on investments in banks.

T: Why do they get more?

S2: Because the government wants to bring equality.

S3: Could you repeat what you were saying?

T: He is saying that there is a government scheme where if you deposit money in the name of a girl then you get more interest.

S3: Because they don't get anything.

S2: So that this tag of burden is removed.

T: The government runs many schemes for parents who only have girls because the society considers them a burden and they don't educate their daughters. Some parents might even think of killing her as she is such a big burden. This is just to give an incentive. These schemes are not a solution because they don't change the mindset of people. They still consider them a burden; the schemes are just some help to carry that burden. Laws or such schemes can't change the mindset. They can just punish after the crime has taken place.

S2: But whose mindset is to be changed?

T: Everyone, the entire society.

S2: Whose mindset is to be changed more?

S3: Our own.

T: Yes, we have to start with ourselves.

...

S2: For example, if we have to stop child marriages then who will the government try to change first?

T: First you shouldn't let it happen near you, not in your own family. Just this is enough.

S2: As long as the girl doesn't resist then what can others do. If not here then she'll get married somewhere else.

T: That girl is 13 years old. You don't have the courage to stop her marriage and you are demanding that child to do it.

S2: I will stop it but what if her parents marry her somewhere else?

T: He is saying that the child should say something first only then we can do something.

Students: No Didi.

S1: We should intervene before only.

S2: They should understand that she is so small.

T: Okay, let's talk about boys. You said that boys' responsibility increases after marriage. Right? Now there's a family, everyone will say do a job! So what's the solution?

S3: He marries only after he has matured enough.

S4: And he is settled and he can earn.

S3: And can rent a room for living separately.

S4: He is successful enough to take care of his family.

T: What's the solution?

S4: One is that both of them together earn, and share the responsibility.

S2: Didi, if society has made so many rules, it has made a very good one for girls too. That the boy has to bear the entire burden, and not the girl.

S5: Nothing like that brother. Both of them have to bear it together.

T: Okay. So what can we do so that this doesn't happen? That girl should also work?

S6: That if the girl wants to work, then nobody should stop her.

T: Yes. Not stop her. Absolutely correct.

S6: The parents don't say that "you don't study, you don't do this that etc."

...

S3: They admit them in a school quite late.

S1: They say what will you do with the education as you have to do household chores only.

T: First you don't let her work then you say that she is a burden. They shouldn't stop her; they should educate her so that both of them have equal responsibilities after marriage. What if the boy loses his job after marriage? If only he is earning, then that will be a big problem. Our partner should be our equal.

...

T: Both husband and wife should do equal work, outside and at home also. If the wife is working outside, then she won't be able to do all the work at home. So, men should share that work also. When you were telling us about the problems that the girl faces, that she has to do all the work at home, raise the children, she manages the budget, take care of in-laws . . .

...

T: We were talking about marriage, so what kind of a family would we like to imagine? Both husband and wife feel burdened because of the rules of society. Both are not able to live how they want, one has one kind of burden the other has another burden. If both share the burden, then something can change. Usually when money is needed, girls are sent out to work, but that means

in the end the girl is doing both kinds of work, outside and inside the house. The husband doesn't do the house work. My mother has always earned more than or as much as my father. She is a teacher and she only has funded the construction of our house. She also did all the household chores, raised me and my brother. For ten years she used to get up at 4 a.m. and work till 5, and then took a train for one and a half hours to teach in a village.

...

T: So in the end, wife ends up doing both the things. My mother supported a lot but my father didn't support enough. At most he would give us milk before we left for school. And my uncle used to help a lot at home, he used to cut vegetables, etc. My uncle is just one example, but mostly it doesn't happen that both share the burden equally. In the end the wife works at home and outside also. You must have seen it yourself. Tell us your examples.

S1: Yes, my mother does this.

S2: My sister.

T: Is she married?

S2: Yes.

T: So, she works outside and at home also. What does she do?

S2: She is a maid.

T: And her husband doesn't help out at home much?

S2: No, he leaves at 7 a.m.

T: Even if the wife is earning as much as the husband, even then her work at home isn't any less.

...

T: You had said that the girl should also work outside because you do. So you should look at work this way, that work shouldn't become any one person's burden. How would we imagine a happy family?

S1: When both of them work together.

T: We think that we are earning also. So, earning is a big thing for us.

- Teacher's goal should be to raise an indignation to what is considered commonplace and natural in many families in our society and show boys how they might change this if they choose. That social norms are made by us and can be changed by us.
- Teacher should inform the boys of the laws made for women's protection.
- Teacher should also question the essentiality of marriage for both boys and girls. Especially for girls. They can do many things with their lives. Why is it seen as their only career or at least their primary career?

Homework

Discuss this lesson with your sisters and mothers. See what they say.

Lesson 19 | Violence against girls: Marriage and dowry

Objective

- Help boys see how dowry is a very pernicious practice with serious consequences for both boys and girls
- Help boys see that dowry is particularly harmful to girls with serious physically and emotionally damaging consequences
- Help boys see that though on the surface it looks like boys and men gain from this practice, actually there is very little real gain
- Help boys see that marrying for a dowry is akin to boys “selling” themselves
- Help raise boys’ consciousness and enable them to raise their voices against dowry and to take action in their own lives
- Inform them about the laws against dowry in India

Method

- Critical dialogues in small groups and in whole class format
- Sharing stories about dowry related violence
- Improvised drama

Duration

- 60 minutes

Activity

- Teacher does a recap of the previous lesson in a circle.
- Teacher picks up dowry as a “bad thing” from this discussion. She should ask the boys to break up in small groups and discuss what they think about dowry as a practice, asking the following questions:
 - What is dowry?
 - Why does it happen?
 - Who gains from it?
 - Who loses?
 - What are its consequences?
 - Why did you say dowry is a bad thing?
 - Does it have any advantages for any one? What are those?

- Teacher should ask the boys to present their small group reports to the whole class and she should pick up points for discussion. The conversation might go something like this:

[In a previous dialogue all the boys had said that dowry is bad. This dialogue begins with the teacher asking the boys why dowry is bad. Later the teacher distributes a page from a book taught in a BA course²⁶—see photo below—which enlists the “advantages” of dowry. One by one they discuss each advantage. The teacher asks them what they think about each point. The boys disagree with almost every advantage and give sound justifications for it.]

T: Why is dowry a bad thing? Everyone here said that it is bad, why is it so?

S1: Dowry is bad because they ask for it and become greedy. If they can't afford to buy a car then they ask the girl's family to buy it for them. If the girl's family is giving less dowry then they ask for even more.

T: What if they don't get what they ask for?

S1: Then they stop the marriage.

T: What else?

S1: If the marriage still happens then they beat her for not bringing enough dowry with her.

T: [Student 2]?

S2: Asking for dowry is illegal and it shouldn't be taken.

T: Why? Everyone says that the father wants to give it to her daughter. So, what is the problem?

S2: Because the father is also sending his daughter, not selling her.

T: Meaning?

S2: They are getting a daughter-in-law and on top of that they want dowry also.

T: [Student 3]?

S3: Dowry is bad because the father is sending his daughter away and he also has to give dowry also.

T: So, why is it bad? They will also bear all her expenses, so you will have to give something for that.

S3: The parents raise her from childhood and then they have to send her away and also give money for that.

T: But they will also bear all her expenses, so you will have to give something for that, right?

S4: They are giving away their daughter, that's such a big thing! Dowry is bad because they have to send their daughter away and also give money. If they don't then their daughter is tortured after marriage. The parents give dowry so that their daughter is happy after marriage. I should neither take dowry when I get married nor give it when my sister gets married. If we all do this then this practice of exchange of dowry will stop.

T: If we give enough dowry then the girl will be happy at her in-law's place. What does this mean?

S4: The husband will think that her parents have given him so much so he would want to keep her happy.

T: So, the more they give the more he will try to keep her happy.

²⁶ Quoted in TIMESOFINDIA.COM, “The 'advantages of dowry,' according to a college's study material,” *Times of India*, October 21, 2017 (<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/the-advantages-of-dowry-according-to-a-colleges-study-material/articleshow/61163337.cms>).

S4: He is more excited that way. "I've got so much, I'm rich now," he must be thinking all this. So, he keeps his wife happy.

T: So, his marriage is with the money not with the girl?

S4: Yes. Boy's family shouldn't take dowry and girl's family shouldn't give it, that way this practice will stop.

[One student enters late in class and is asked why dowry is bad.]

S5: Because when a boy is born then everyone is happy but if a girl is born then they are not so happy because they start worrying about giving dowry.

S4: As soon as a daughter is born the parents limit their expenses.

T: Yes, they start saving for dowry. That is why she becomes a burden. Why else is it bad?

S5: Because she won't get married unless you give dowry.

S4: Even if she does get married, they won't keep her happy.

S5: They will beat her.

T: So, I have this page of a book, it's used in a BA course and it mentions the advantages of dowry. Like I had told you that our books, movies, laws, etc., they only reflect the mentality of the society. Let us discuss these advantages one by one.

S1: [S1 reads from the page.] "The marriage of ugly girls who otherwise would have gone without a partner."

T: It means that ugly girls can also get married if their family offers lots of money; without dowry they would not have been able to marry. What do you think about this?

S2: But boys are also ugly.

T: Yes, but they don't mention boys anywhere. Actually no one is ugly. We are all beautiful in our own ways.

S3: If a nice boy comes to see the girl then he wouldn't want to marry her, so her parents buy the boy through dowry.

T: So, is this point right?

S3: It does happen but it's wrong.

T: Then the boy agrees. What kind of a boy is that!

S3: Even the girl doesn't like that her parents are giving so much dowry.

T: What about the looks of boy? We just have to assume that he is extremely handsome.

S3: An ugly boy will choose any girl.

T: They consider themselves very good looking.

T: But imagine your younger sister is not considered attractive and your family members are thinking of giving lots of dowry to get her married, then what would you do?

S3: They will have to give dowry. How long can she stay at her parents' place?

T: But you are marrying her to a boy who is doing it just for the sake of money. He is marrying the money not your sister and he wouldn't even take care of her, he would just keep cleaning the car.

S2: Then they wouldn't marry if you don't give dowry.

T: Then you should wait.

S3: You wouldn't find any family who wouldn't want dowry. The boy is for sale.

T: So, this is the first point. We are laughing at this, but some intelligent person has written all this, and it is being taught somewhere. This is shocking! The second point is: "It is a useful and effective method of attracting good, handsome, and sometimes unwilling boys for marriage."

[The boys laugh a bit.]

T: Did you understand?

S1: Yes.

T: Explain it.

S1: Suppose there is some handsome boy who doesn't want to marry but when his parents tell him that he is getting so much in dowry so he agrees.

S3: But when he is unwilling then . . .

S4: They become willing when they hear about the dowry.

T: Suppose you have a friend who always said that he would never marry but then suddenly he is ready to marry when he hears about how much he is getting. So, what would you tell him?

S3: I would call him greedy.

T: But this actually happens. The boy sometimes doesn't even like the girl, but still he marries her because of the dowry. The third point is: "Dowry would help newlywed couple to start afresh. Dowry provides them some basis and foothold for facing hard realities of life; it may provide for self-employment." They are saying that dowry helps the newlyweds to settle down and start a new home.

S1: Yes, this can be true.

T: Okay. But for this why should only the girl's parents give money? Even the boy's family should contribute.

S2: But the girl's family always contributes more.

S1: They will give just once, and he will take care of her and provide for her slowly throughout his life.

T: Who, the boy?

S1: Yes.

T: But here the boy and girl are one unit. Together they need money to start a new life. So why should only the girl's family contribute?

S1: Because the girl lives in boy's house and they take care of her all her life. So, the girl's parents give all the items needed for a living.

T: The girl could be doing a job and she would also be doing household chores. It's not that you are bringing some animal that just needs feeding.

S4: She would do your work also.

S5: She would cook, clean, wash your clothes.

T: Even if she doesn't do all that but it's not that she would sit idle. The fourth advantage of dowry is: "Dowry provides an opportunity to meritorious boys of poor classes to go for higher education and make their future." So, what do you think about this? Is this an advantage of dowry?

S6: How long can he study with that money!

S7: It will get over one day.

S5: Who will take care of expenses of the house when he is studying?

T: And they haven't said anything about girls' education. What about her education?

S3: They won't let her study.

S7: But this is not dowry, this would be helping someone.

T: But this dowry is good, right? How can you justify dowry like this!

S7: Suppose the husband is about to get a job in a bank and for that he needs one lakh rupees and he doesn't have it. So, he would ask his wife to ask from her parents that if they have the money then they could give it to him.

T: But if they don't have it and are forced to give it?

S7: Yes, then that would be called asking for dowry.

S4: But where did you get this article?

T: A friend sent it to me, it's taught in a BA course in Bangalore.

S4: People are being taught all this; that's why their mentality is like this. All these points are totally wrong.

S7: If they teach the advantages of dowry, then they will definitely ask for it during marriage.

T: So, the fifth point is: "Dowry increases the status of women in family." They are saying that a woman who brings lots of dowry is respected more in the family.

S1: Yes, it happens.

T: Let us read it further: "She is treated well just for her economic contribution. It affects the love and affection her husband bears for her. A poor girl who does not bring huge dowry in her marriage does not usually receive the same attention and affection. Dowry will determine how much her husband will love her."

S4: How can you relate love with money!

T: But a girl who does not bring enough dowry is always pestered for it, that she didn't bring anything.

S3: Yes, they taunt her.

T: But what do you think about this point?

S7: This does happen. They always taunt her no matter how much she brings.

Advantages of Dowry

Generally, though accepted as an evil practice, dowry has its supporters. They want to retain this custom in one or the other form. According to them, dowry has some advantages. The important ones are:

1. The marriage of ugly girls, who otherwise would have gone without a partner, is made possible by offering heavy amount of dowry.
2. It is a useful and effective method of attracting good, handsome and sometimes unwillings boys for marriage.
3. Dowry would help the newly wed couple to start afresh. Dowry provides them some basis and foothold for facing hard realities of life. It may provide for self-employment.
4. Dowry provides an opportunity to meritorious boys of poor classes to go for higher education and make their future.
5. Dowry increases the status of women in family. As a woman brings a substantial sum at marriage, she is treated well just for her economic contribution. It affects the love and affection her husband bears for her. A poor girl who does not bring huge dowry in her marriage does not usually receive the same attention and affection that is bestowed upon a rich girl.
6. Some contend that dowry would help people to raise their status in society. If, by paying dowry marriage of their daughters is possible in high status groups, there are people waiting for it. This would help them move up on the status ladder.
7. Dowry maintains harmony and unity in the family. Some people feel that the dowry system should continue but a woman should not be given any share in her father's property. They are scared of disruption, dissection, jealousy and factions and feuds which daughter's inheritance may lead to. Thus, they want to repeal the Hindu succession Act, 1956. According to this act, a daughter may claim a share in the ancestral asset, but she does not accept the liabilities. Hence, it is better we give dowry, but not a share in property. This will also avoid fragmentation of landholding and help in the maintenance of family unity and harmony.

The merits listed above does not mean that dowry is recommendable.

S2: In my house this doesn't happen. My sister-in-law didn't bring anything but . . .

T: Yes, that happens. In some homes this doesn't happen. Suppose your father is borrowing money for dowry in your younger sister's marriage so that they take better care of her. Then what would you say to him?

S4: I would say, "It's not right. What are you doing?"

S7: But then he would take care of her only because of money and not because he really wants to.

S2: "We will find another boy, but we can't marry her like this."

T: Why?

S7: Because he would care only because of money. It's not that he loves her.

T: And how long can he take care of her for this reason? Four years? Five years?

S7: Then later he would ask for more.

S2: Yes, he would just keep asking for more.

T: The last point is: "It is better to give dowry and not a share in property." Rather than giving her share in property it is better to give dowry. What do you think about this?

S7: But she is not getting the dowry anyway, the boy's family is getting the dowry.

S3: If they give a car, then the husband will drive it. If they give a bed, then both will sleep in it.

T: If you give property, then you have a right over it; but she doesn't have any right over the dowry.

S2: All these points are totally wrong.

T: But people say these things only while defending dowry system.

S2: But they have put it this way, "Advantages of Dowry!"

T: But they have compared dowry to a share in property. This comparison only is so foolish.

- Teacher should point out how dowry devalues girls so that parents don't want girls. Should relate stories of dowry harassment and even dowry deaths from real life experience and news items to illustrate how girls and their families are exploited and blackmailed. Brothers and fathers of girls are part of the people being exploited. It is NOT a substitute for a girl's share in her parental wealth because she does not get any control over it, and it is never of the same value. It is inherently an unethical, exploitative, and violent practice which the law recognises as such, which is why it has been banned. Teacher should give them the law against dowry, see below.

1. Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

- a) Section 2 of this Act defines dowry as any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given in connection with the marriage.
- b) This legislation provides for a penalty in Section 3: if any person gives, takes, or abets giving or receiving of dowry.
- c) The punishment could be imprisonment for a term not less than 5 years and a fine not less than INR 15,000, or the value of the dowry received, whichever is higher.
- d) The burden of proving that an offense was not committed is on the persons charged and not on the victim or her family.

2. Indian Penal Code

- a) Section 304B was added to the Indian Penal Code, which made dowry death a specific offence punishable with a minimum sentence of imprisonment for 7 years and a maximum imprisonment for life.
- b) It provided that if the death of a woman is caused by burns or bodily injury or occurs in suspicious circumstances within 7 years of her marriage—and there's evidence to show that before her death she was subjected to cruelty or harassment by her husband or his relative regarding the demand for dowry—then the husband or the relative shall be deemed to have caused her death.

- But people still continue to give and take dowry—why is this the case? Who should be opposing it? Why is marriage of girls considered so essential that parents will go to any length? If they collectively decide not to give dowry for their daughter's marriage, boys' parents would have no choice but to stop demanding it. Also, relate cases where there is no dowry when marriages are voluntary and not arranged. How can we put an end to this harmful social norm and practice? Who can play a lead role in this? What can boys do and what can girls do?
- In the next session, Teacher should break the boys into small groups and give them the following scenarios and ask them to devise a fitting end to the situation, where the problem is resolved.

1. Ritu's marriage is being arranged by her parents. The boy's parents are demanding a large sum for dowry because their son has a permanent government job. Ritu's father, uncle, and brother are part of the negotiations.
2. Anita is married. Her parents have given a large dowry, which her brother and father worked hard to accumulate. Her father-in-law is demanding they pay for the shop they are buying, which will be in the father-in-law's name. Anita's father has no more money. Anita is tortured and is in danger.
3. Sarita is refusing to marry Arun because his family is demanding a dowry. Her parents are counselling her to adjust.
4. Let students make up a scenario.

This is meant for boys to think of solutions, also to rehearse arguments against dowry and most importantly to see how boys are also affected.

Homework

- Write a one-page opinion piece for a newspaper about the ill effects of dowry and how it can be stopped.
- Interview your sisters about the kind of man they would like to marry, and what kind of life they would like to have after marriage.

Lesson 20 | Reimagining marriage: What might be an alternative form of marriage?

Objective

- To help boys imagine alternatives to the current unequalitarian form of patriarchal marriage
- To help boys see how a more egalitarian form is good for them too, leading to a better life for them as well
- To help boys see that both the boy and the girl have every right and also the responsibility thereof to decide who they will marry, when they will marry, and how this marriage should be structured. They can of course only make wise decisions about the above if they are mature adults.

Method

- Critical dialogues in small groups and whole class format

Duration

- 60 minutes

Activity

- Teacher should recap the learnings from the last lesson on dowry in the circle.
- Teacher should ask the boys to volunteer to read some of their opinion pieces.
- Teacher should then ask them to share what their sisters said in response to their interviews.
- Discuss their sisters' responses. Girls might have said they want the boy to be richer, older, taller, and more educated than them. Discuss the logic of this and ask them why this is necessary? Why can't the reverse be true, or better still, a more equal arrangement?
- Break them into small groups and ask them to discuss the following questions:
 - What kind of girl do they want to marry?
 - Why do they want to get married?
 - What kind of life do they want to have after their marriage?
 - Do they want to decide whom to marry? Or should their parents make this decision for them?
- Teacher should ask the boys to think of all the discussions they have had so far and to think of a form of marriage which would be good for boys and for girls—one that does not leave anyone vulnerable or powerless. Give boys enough time to discuss, debate, and imagine.
- After the group presentations to the whole class, teacher should discuss all the salient points with the whole class, asking the following questions:
 - Should boys and girls have the right to decide who they will marry? Why?
 - What is a good age for this? Is the current law about 18 for girls and 21 for boys a good one? Should it be equal for both? If so, then what is a good minimum age when both might be considered mature enough to decide?
 - Should caste, class and religion be a consideration? (This will merit a deeper discussion in the session when we discuss equality and difference more generally.)
 - Should dowry be a consideration?
 - Should girls have to give up their homes and names once they get married?
 - If not then what might be a better arrangement?
 - Who should decide how many children to have: men or women?
 - Who should provide for the family?
 - Who should do the house work?
 - Who should have control over the family's income and its distribution?
 - Who should make important decisions like purchase of house, relocation, child rearing, etc?
- Teacher's goal should be to lead the boys to imagine a more egalitarian form of marriage where housework, providing for the family, decisions regarding how many children to have, where to live, and how to spend the family income should be joint decisions—and that this is possible.

Teacher should give many examples of people who live like this. Teacher should make sure to point out that boys' lives will also be better. See example of a dialogue related to this:

T: Okay, let's talk about boys. You said that boys' responsibility increases after marriage. Right? Now there's a family, everyone will say do a job! So, what's the solution?

S1: He marries only after he has matured enough.

S2: And he is settled and he can earn.

S1: And can rent a room for living separately.

S2: He is successful enough to take care of his family.

T: [Student 2]? What's the solution?

S2: One is that both of them together earn and share the responsibility.

S3: Didi, if society has made so many rules, it has made a very good one for girls too. That the boy has to bear the entire burden, and not the girl.

S4: Nothing like that brother. Both of them have to bear it together.

T: Okay. So, what can we do so that this doesn't happen? That girl should also work?

S4: That if the girl wants to work, then nobody should stop her.

T: Yes. Not stop her. Absolutely correct.

S5: The parents don't say that "you don't study, you don't do this that etc."

...

S6: They admit them in a school quite late.

S1: They say what will you do with the education as you have to do household chores only.

T: First you don't let her work then you say that she is a burden. They shouldn't stop her; they should educate her so that both of them have equal responsibilities after marriage. What if the boy loses his job after marriage? If only he is earning, then that will be a big problem. Our partner should be our equal.

.....

T: You had said that the girl should also work outside because you do. So, you should look at work this way, that work shouldn't become any one person's burden. How would we imagine a happy family?

S1: When both of them work together.

T: We think that we are earning also. So, earning is a big thing for us. But shouldn't men work at home too?

- Make a collective whole class description of an egalitarian form of marriage. Ask boys to write it down to share with their sisters at home.

Homework

Share your whole class description of an egalitarian form of marriage, and see what your sisters think of it.

Lesson 21 | Violence against girls: Sexual harassment on the streets

Objective

- Help boys to deconstruct a violent conception of masculinity prevalent in patriarchal societies
- Help them understand how it is detrimental to boys too
- Help them see how harassment of girls on streets—euphemistically called “eve-teasing” in India—is an expression of this violence. It is not harmless and has grave consequences for girls, limiting their mobility, life opportunities, and compromising their safety.
- Help them empathise with girls’ feelings of insecurity, humiliation, and violation
- Help them understand that girls are not sex objects, but persons; and deserve to be respected
- Help them build an alternative non-violent view of masculinity and manhood
- Give them the conceptual and practical tools to counter peer pressure from other boys
- Help them understand that harassment of girls on the streets is a lot like boys bullying each other

Method

- Critical dialogue in small groups and whole class format
- Drama

Duration

60 minutes

Activity

- Teacher should begin the class by relating an incident when she was harassed on the street or in a bus. She can ask boys to relate incidents that they have witnessed or participated in.
- Break them up in small groups and ask them to devise a short skit about a girl or girls being harassed on the street.
- After they present their skits, teacher should use the plays to contextualise the discussion. Ask them why boys do this. Help them understand that it is a way of expressing their “manhood,” or power. The conversation could go something like this:

T: Do boys harass her to show or prove something to each other?

S: They bet on it.

T: Meaning?

S: They say, “She will turn around now. She will talk to me.”

T: Okay. And what do they talk among themselves? So what if she actually turns around?

S: Then he wins and gets the money.

T: Then he is a “man.” So, one way to go from being a boy to a man is to harass a girl? Because the girl is turning around because of me. Do you think they do it to show off among themselves?

S: Yes, it happens.

T: So why else do they harass girls?

S: To show how powerful they are.

T: To show it to their friends or to the girl?

S: To the girl.

S: To the society.

T: Is there anyone who thinks that harassment doesn’t happen in reality?

T2: Even your mothers would have experienced it.

T: How would the girl feel? She is just minding her own business and then someone harasses her.

S: Mentally her confidence would be reduced to zero.

T: Okay, confidence to walk on the road?

S: Yes. A kind of fear would be there all the time.

T: Imagine a girl on road, she is just 12, going to her school, and someone teases her. Often older boys also do it. So how would she feel?

S: Bad.

T: She might even stop going to school.

S: She is scared. Might tell at home.

T: Does she talk about it at home?

S: Maybe.

T: Maybe, maybe not. It might happen that the parents only stop her from going to school. When I was small, my brother used to accompany me to the bus stand when I had to go to school. But then he changed his school and I had to go alone and 2 or 3 boys used to follow me every day. And I was so scared that I used to cry when the bus arrived. After 10 or 15 days I told my father, and it wasn’t easy telling him. I thought that he would scold me only [and think] that I would have done something first for them to follow me. Even Ma’am [referring to a female teacher] would have experienced it.

T2: Even today when I go out of my house alone, someone whistles, or passes a comment, or sings a song. That’s why I don’t like going outside alone. Either I want to be on my vehicle so that I can just go immediately, or not go out at all.

S: Girls have that much power that they can get someone to beat up the boys, but they don’t do it.

S: They have the power, but they don’t do it out of self-respect—for their own dignity.

S: They can call the women’s helpline 1090.

...

T: So, if girls have so much power that they can get them beaten up, so why don’t they do it?

S: Because they don’t want to get involved with the police and also because the public will see.

T: So let them see; after all, it’s not their fault?

S: They will be wrong from the point of view of the society.

...

T: For a girl it's a very painful experience and maybe everyone knows that. It's not that we are all blind here. So should this be stopped or is it okay to do it?

S: It should be stopped.

S: They shouldn't do it.

T: Yes, but still it happens. So, why is that?

S: Because their thinking is wrong.

T: We will feel bad if it happens with our sisters. Then we will feel like killing that person and we'll want to show our masculinity. Boys are told to be men and show their masculinity so they do all this. It's not that only girls are at loss. Think what boys lose because of this. We know who we are. Still, to prove that we have to harm someone else. Society, or peer pressure, forces us to do such things. Even if we like that person, we are being taught to harm her just to prove we are men. So it's also very harmful for the boys also. What are we becoming because of this! Same thing happens after marriage, but in a different way. If the wife puts more salt in food, then he beats her. Why does he beat her?

S: Not everyone beats his wife.

T: Yes, that's right. What kind of men don't beat their wives?

S: Those who are sensible.

S: Those who are educated.

T: What is that sensibility? If they are educated, then what difference does it make?

S: They consider men and women as equals.

...

S: You can't clap with one hand. The girl must have done something that's why the boy harasses her.

T: Ma'am how many boys who harassed you on the street had known you from before?

T2: No one.

S: Did you know us before this?

T: No.

S: But we recognize you.

T: Okay so you're saying the girl might not know the boys, but the boys know her. So what did Ma'am do to provoke the boys to tease her?

S: You must have had a fight or slapped someone before.

T: Do you really think that's possible? Every day so many boys harass women on streets. Do you think every boy is getting slapped? If that was the case, then this would not be happening. Think a little. You don't have to answer immediately.

S: Girls should change their route; they shouldn't go on that street where boys harass them.

T: But there are so many boys, how many routes will she change? Is this a feasible solution?

S: It's temporary.

S: There should be police everywhere.

T: Isn't it possible that boys stop doing this? Can't this urge to harass be suppressed?

S: If the boy realizes that he also has a mother and sister and his sister is also a girl, then this can be stopped.

T: This harassment won't stop?

S: No.

S: No.

T: Why?

S: Boys are like that only.

S: Thinking.

T: Whose thinking?

S: Wrong company.

T: Like he's saying that this won't change. Who all think that harassment will never stop?

S: It will stop.

S: No, no. It won't stop.

S: It won't stop, but it can be reduced.

T: Okay, why won't it stop?

S: It can stop, like if four or five boys are harassing a girl and if that girl turns out to be a sister of one of them, then this will stop.

T: This won't happen every time.

T2: This is a special case.

S: Whoever's sister it is, only that person will learn a lesson.

T: It's not like a boy who has a sister doesn't harass anyone. Suppose she is not anyone's sister, can't it happen that the boys stop one another from doing it?

- Teacher should try to get boys to understand that this is wrong and that boys are conditioned to think like this, but can stop. Boys bring up mothers and sisters often, so teacher can use this. But also point out that all girls and women are someone's mothers and sisters, so they deserve to be respected.
- Teacher should also raise the issue of girls being reduced to their bodies or good looks. Get them to empathise with how girls feel at being treated as objects. For example, if boys raise the point about it being the girl's fault:

T: You said something about it's in the girl's character; it's something in them that invites boys to harass them. It's because they show off their beauty, or the clothes they wear. So, are girls inviting boys to harass them? Why can't boys see anything else in a girl except her good looks? Why can't they look at her as a person?

S: Boys look at their beauty and follow her.

T: Because of their beauty they forget that she is also a human being, she also has feelings, she might be feeling extremely bad, she might even stop going to school because I am harassing her.

...

T2: You have to think of how a girl feels when a boy harasses her. That girl can be an unknown person or she can be your sister. Does she enjoy that, or has a problem with that? It can be anything, but think on your own.

T: When she goes back home after she has been harassed, how many times would she be thinking about this?

T2: Recently when I was doing my graduation, I was on the street going to college. Two guys came on a bike, I couldn't see their faces. They touched my back and ran away. There were many people

on the street, all of them saw that, but no one said a word. I was just stunned and stood there for a while. My confidence just vanished, and I felt so bad that I came back home. I knew about 1090, and I knew that there was a police station nearby. I felt extremely bad even though I am a grown up.

...

S: The harasser gets his five minutes of enjoyment, but the girl is in fear forever. She is scared every time she goes out. She might even be stopped from going to school. They might even marry her off soon.

S: If she is brave, then she'll be able to ignore and forget about it.

S: She wouldn't be able to sleep at night because of this. She'll be very anxious.

T: By the time you are brave, you're 26 or 27 years old. Before that it's just fear.

...

S: Their confidence is affected. A fear is there every time she tries to go out—that someone would tease her or pass a comment. She is scared to go out late at night. A tension is there.

T2: What do you think [student]?

S: She might complain at home or change her route.

S: She will be scared.

S: Parents might even ask her what she did to provoke them.

S: Fear of being humiliated, fear for her honor and her family's honor too.

- Teacher should emphasise that girls are persons like boys and boys are sexual beings like girls. They are also good looking like girls are. But harassing them on streets, making catcalls, touching, pushing, and pinching is not a way of showing their attraction to them. Girls don't feel complimented. This is not a legitimate way of flirting. Teacher should ask them why girls don't indulge in this kind of behaviour. This is one way of getting boys to understand that boys harassing girls on streets is almost socially sanctioned, while girls doing the same is not. Boys do it because they can and because it is a sign of their manly power or manhood. Why is this a better way of expressing their manhood than one where they are more respectful and gentle? This way of being a manly man is dangerous for girls, for their own sisters and mothers. It has rendered public places very unsafe for girls. Streets are public places and belong to everyone. Everyone should be able to use them safely. But girls can't use them. They can't go out in the dark, or alone even during the daytime. They live in fear. It is also one of the reasons why parents think of them as "burdens." They have to be protected all the time. This is a very unfair system.
- Teacher should point out how this supposedly harmless teasing can lead to serious things like rape. Give some statistics. Point out how the fear of being raped has very serious consequences for girls' mobility and other life opportunities, like going to school or work.
- Teacher should also discuss the concept of "honor" attached to girls in particular. Why does a girl lose her "honor" if she is raped? What wrong deed has she committed? Also why is her family's honor tied to this? Discuss the concept of being "defiled," "dishonoured," and "ruined." Point out the injustice in this. Why should the rapist, the molester, the harasser not lose his honour? Why is his family's honour not compromised? Point out that it doesn't make sense. Not

just that—it leads to their families and society blaming girls and keeping them caged. This is not fair. So this conception of “honor” needs to change.

Homework

Discuss your class lesson with your sisters and mothers and see what they think. Ask them how they feel when they are out on the streets and are harassed. What do they think is the solution? Try and think of a solution with them.

Lesson 22 | Violence and boys: Finding solutions to sexual harassment

Objective

This is a continuation of the last lesson and will carry the same objectives. There is a special focus on helping boys think of solutions and helping them understand that they do not become less “manly” or less masculine if they are respectful of girls, or gentler. In fact, they become more manly. The world is a safer place for both men and women if boys and men do not sexually harass girls. So, what can they do to make it one?

Method

- Critical dialogues
- Improvised drama

Duration

60 minutes

Activity

- Teacher should get the boys in a circle and do a quick recap of the last lesson.
- She should ask them what their sisters and mothers had to say about their discussion. Let boys share their homework with the whole class.
- Picking up on this, Teacher should discuss with the whole class how girls feel. The conversation may go something like this:

T: So, how do girls feel when something like this happens to them?

S1: Scared! Her confidence would be wrecked.

S2: She would feel terrible, feel bad. Why is she born a girl?

T: Someone was saying last time that she would feel so uncomfortable and scared that she won't even be able to sleep at night.

S3: She would be scared to go onto that street again.

T: And you all said she would be scared to even inform her family about it. All right. So, let's see what can be done about this.

T2(male): Have you ever had to face such a situation? Where something happened to you that frightened you so much that you couldn't tell your family or couldn't sleep at night? Have you ever felt this?

[Boys don't say anything.]

T3 (female): May be because of lack of money.

[They say nothing for some time.]

S1: When I get sick!

S2: When I watch a horror movie!

T2: So, I used to feel like this when I was very small, when I was your age. I was very tiny and thin. Whenever I would come back from school, the bigger boys used to bully me. They would push me around and take my money. Then I wanted to be stronger and bigger. I didn't want to be like myself. Then I would not be able to sleep. Has something like this happened to you?

T: Or a time where something is done to you and you don't like it? Like last time, [student] was telling that he was beaten up in last school without any reason.

T3: Or something you might have heard, say ragging happening in college. When we are weak, and someone else who is stronger than us, they bully us. And it's not essential that they are older than us. A lot of times even peers do that. Like he [pointing to a student, who laughs] does to others.

- Teacher should let boys talk about how they feel when they are bullied, or when other gangs of boys attack them on the streets. How do they feel? She should point out that this is how girls feel all the time. Help them empathise.
- Teacher should then move to solutions. Ask them to sit in small groups and think of ideas about how girls can deal with this sexual harassment. How can we make the streets safer for girls?
- Discuss small group reports in the larger group. The conversation may go something like this:

T: So you guys have come up with a lot of ideas, like the girl can pick up a stone and hit the boy; she can call the police; she can ensure that she is never alone when she is out, she shouldn't go out in the dark or on deserted streets. If she does all this, she will be safe. So, these are all things girls can do. But why is the whole responsibility on them alone? They are the victims. They aren't doing anything wrong. What about the boys? What can boys do? Why can't we stop doing this? How can we stop doing this? How can we stop other boys from doing this? Do you want to make the world safer for girls?

Boys: Yes

T: Why?

S1: Those girls could very well be sister of one of us. And all women are like our mothers and sisters.

T: And? You guys said we want to put a stop to this? Why so?

S1: Because the name of the country is also tarnished by such things.

T2: So, to make your country safer? Isn't it?

T3: [Student], why do you want to stop it?

S2: Its wrong! No one should do this.

T: Why is it wrong?

S2: Because even we have sisters and mothers, how would we feel if someone harasses them!

T2: OK, so everybody agrees to this? That we shouldn't do this. Or someone feels that well, why do we care?

[Boys say nothing.]

T2: If you think this is wrong, then why do you think this is happening?

S1: Because no action is taken against the boys.

T2: So, it's like stealing something because nobody saw you! Then you keep doing it again.

S3: People thinking is bad.

T: Which people?

S3: Boys.

S4: These boys get together and do this stuff. If they don't meet up, then how would they do all this?

T2: So, its like a game! Boys get together and enjoy this! OK, I just want to say that I too have been there. I have harassed girls. We would get together with a group of friends and shout things at girls. It happens in many places.

T: And like last time we were saying that educated boys do not do this! It happens a lot, and everywhere.

T2: But that doesn't mean that it should continue to happen. It does stop and it can stop.

[Boys then worked on the drama, below, where they display how a group of boys harass a girl, and how one boy tries to stop other boys.]

Scene (suggested by a student): Four boys stand along the side of a road. The boys are drinking beers. The girl was walking by. One boy shouts, "Look, what a piece is going!" (kyamaaljarahahi!). Three of them start harassing the girl. And one boy says, "Stop!"

[The boys displayed great reluctance to play the girl, which then T2 (a male teacher) decided to play. As soon as they started playing boys, the entire space of masculinity unfolded! Not only were their dialogues very suitable, they harassed T2 quite actively and were happy to act the scene! They also enjoyed acting that they were drinking on the side of road!]

Iteration 1:

"Look what a piece is going."

"Stop her."

Three boys walked towards the girl, and say lecherously, "Where are you going! Should we drop you!" They start touching her physically.

They laugh at all of it.

S1: So next, to stop, we can do like the girl will turn out to be sister of one of the boys!

T: But in reality, there's very less chance that such a thing would happen. It's a coincidence.

S2: So one of the boy's mother would suddenly walk in!

T2: No! The mother is not here!

S3: The girl would ask for help from other people on road.

T2: OK, good idea. But you are all boys here. Let's think about what the boys can do, and not what the girl can do.

S4: So the boy who started commenting, he will say to all others, "Don't touch her. I was just commenting. Don't do this, because police will come."

T2: OK, let's try this.

T: And the rest have to react the way boys would react if such a thing happens.

Iteration 2:

They harass the girl.

One of the boys tries to stop, saying the above.

The other three boys start beating him up!

T2: OK, this probably shows if we try to be too brave, it can be dangerous for us only. Now?

T: So in this, he just got beaten up. Now, someone has any other idea?

S4: He will call the police.

Iteration 3:

They repeat the scene.

When police comes, all boys run away with the police managing to catch one of the boys.

T: So, what we are doing here is we have a situation where something wrong is happening. Someone is getting harassed. There is violence happening to a girl, and we are thinking about how we—who are present—can change this situation. First suggestion was that the girl will ask for help. But, we are not the girl, so we won't talk about what she can or should do. Next suggestion was that one of the boys tries to stop the others. Then he got beaten up! Now you showed that he called the police. So what happened this time? Do you like the outcome?

T2: What do think of this situation? Is it good? Is it bad?

Boys: Its bad. Yes, Its bad.

T2: For whom?

Boys: For the girl!

S4: For boys, it turned bad when police came.

T: But would you be able to call police on your friends?

T3: So what are we trying to do here? That if you and your friends are standing in a group. And some of you start to harass a girl, then what would you do? What would you say to your friend in such a situation? How would you make them understand [that this is wrong]. This is what we want to know.

S5: We will say, "Don't do this brother." (Mat chhedbhai!)

T2: Does anyone else have any other idea that they want to try?

S4: The boy tried to gather and take help from other people on the street.

T: OK now others also give me ideas.

T2: So, the boy can record the video from his mobile of other boys harassing, and then give the video to the police.

S4: No, we can't make video of a girl getting harassed! That is a wrong thing to do!

S1: We will have to call the police.

T: Without the help of police, you can't stop your friend?

S2: He tried to stop, but then other boys just beat him up only!

S1: So, the people on the road, they can record the video when boys start beating up this boy who tries to stop.

T2: No, whatever has to be done is to be done by you. It has to be one of the boys from the group. The hero of this story has to be from one of the boys!

S5: Maybe he can make the video quietly. To give to police.

T2: OK fine. Lets do the video.

Iteration 4:

They acted the scene.

The bad boys again beat up the boy as he started to make the video.

T2: What happened this time?

S4: The boys stop harassing the girl and start hitting the boy who is making video.

T2: So our hero gets beaten up. Is the choice now between a girl getting harassed and a boy getting beaten up?

T: The girl got saved, but the boy who was trying to help got beaten up.

T2: Are you happy with this?

[Some said no, some said yes!]

S4: Didi, like this, even the boy who is good, he will become bad one day!

S2: See Didi, by the time, we are beating up this guy, the girl can run away.

S6: Yes Didi, the girl can then run away in that time.

T: So which situation you feel is better?

S2: The one where police comes.

S3: Didi, maybe what can happen is that when we are beating up the boy, then he will get injured really badly. Then the other bad boys will realize what they had done!

T2: OK. So, the problem that we have here is beginning to look very difficult to me. So you have to think more about the situation. See what happens around you, and bring more examples of what we can do. Today you gave some very good suggestions. But now till next class, think more about how we can stop this harassment. And get more ideas.

- Teacher gets the boys to do improvised drama with solutions to the street harassment. Boys often come up with stereotypical solutions where they are the protectors: good boys beat up bad boys, police takes action, etc. Teacher should point out that all these are violent solutions.

She should suggest that boys could learn to change themselves and together stop doing this. She should acknowledge that it is a difficult situation, because this conception of being a man is so widely prevalent. But it can be changed if many of them change—if they refrain from participating in such acts regardless of peer pressure, and counsel their friends to do so as well.

- They should also know that there is a law against this, and that this could result in punitive action against them. But more importantly it is **WRONG!**

Homework

Think about solutions where boys make the world a safer place for everybody.

Lesson 23 | Violence and boys: A new conception of masculinity—What kind of boy do I want to be?

Objective

This is a continuation of the past 2 lessons. The focus here is on continuing to find solutions and to lead them to becoming boys who girls can respect and like, and helping them think of a new way of being a boy or man.

Method

- Drama
- Critical dialogue

Duration

- 60 minutes

Activity

- Teacher does a quick recap of last lesson.
- Teacher breaks the boys into groups and asks them to devise a play about the new solutions they have come up with to the problem of sexual harassment of girls on streets. Below is a summary from our lesson:

Group 1 shows that the girl uses pepper spray on the boys after which they start screaming in pain. Then the cops come and take the harassers away.

[In this group, a long discussion had occurred about who will be the girl! Each boy in the group was thinking of it as a punishment. The other group had no issues—[a male student]volunteered to be the girl.]

Group 2 shows that three boys are after a girl. Initially she shouts at them and tells them to go away. But when they don't listen, she slaps one of them. One of the boys gets scared and tells the other two not to do it. He also warns them that he would call the police. Finally, when they don't stop, he does call the cops and they come and take the harassers away.

[All the situations tended to end with either police involvement or bad boys failing all attempts of the good boy by beating him up or breaking his phone! Teacher suggested that they could try slowing down the initial part, when harassment had just started. They should not let it reach the point where boys have started physically harassing the girl because the situation is uncontrollable by then. Teacher suggested they try to stop them right when they start passing comments—as friends, try to show disgust for their behavior.

In the last attempt, they did just that. And by then, a student who was playing one of the bad boys had figured the solution! When good boy was trying to stop them, he initially resisted and continued harassing, but then told other two boys to “listen to him, he is saying something,” and thus stopped the other two. Since this student is a big boy, by being the “converted” boy he was able to stop the others. The remaining two bad boys could not overpower two good boys, mostly because one of the good ones was a big boy.]

T: OK. so what happened here? These guys were able to successfully stop the harassment. What did they do differently? Why were they able to stop it? How was their strategy different?

S5: He made one boy understand.

S1: One of the boys among bad ones turned out to be intelligent.

S6: He wasn't intelligent. But he then understood.

T2: What did he understand? What did that one boy understand?

Boys: That this is wrong.

T: OK. So if the boys who are trying to stop are more in numbers than the boys who are harassing the girl, then its possible?

Boys: Yes.

T: But, nevertheless, we will have to use force/power only?

S4: Yes, Didi.

T: The other thing that was quite interesting for me was that it looks like it is very difficult for one single boy to stop this!

Boys: Yes, Didi.

T: So maybe we have to try together. So, like in last to last class, you guys were telling me that this harassment on streets will never stop. [Student] said this. So maybe this is the reason—that not enough boys are trying to stop. And how did the ones who played the girl feel?

[S6 and S7 played the girl.]

S6: I felt bad!

T: Why?

S6: Because I was left alone [he is referring to being left helpless]. And they were attacking me.

T: And when they were touching you, how did you feel?

S7: I felt scared.

T: About?

S7: That if they do something wrong to me, I won't be able to show my face anywhere!

T: You were this much in character! OK. and these dialogues while harassing the girl, they were too apt! From where have you learned all those?

S7: We get to see it practically no's!

T: Who do you see practically?

S7: So many boys on roads.

S4: In TV also we see this.

S8: In movies.

T: Who all have seen this in real?

S4: Very often, we get to see on the streets.

- Teacher tries to offer advice on how boys might “nip this in the bud” and save a situation before it gets bad. The goal should be to get the boys to see this as being a solvable problem and that they can try to figure out solutions, collectively. Collective action works.
- Teacher should then move to getting them to see that girls do not appreciate their attention and don't interpret it as flirtation. For example:

T: So you were saying that we harass girls because we want to become friends with girls, because girls don't talk to you. So these boys—the ones you have shown harassing other girls—how do their lives feel? What does it look like? Do they have any female friends? Or girls who become their friends?

Boys: No, Didi.

S1: Maybe they have, maybe not.

S2: Even if they [girls] want to become friends, they won't!

T2: Think of boys around you who you know.

T: How does their life look like? Tell me about their life.

S1: Like a loafer (mawaali) type!

T: Are they good friends with girls?

Boys: No

T: Why?

S2: Because everybody knows what sort of boys they are! Nobody wants to be friends with them.

T: So, when we were saying that we are passing lewd comments on girls, we do this because we are trying to talk to them and be friends. Here we are seeing that obviously girls are not friends with such boys. OK, and when we see some boys around us who seem to be good friends with girls, how do they behave with girls?

S3: They don't do all this. They don't harass girls.

S1: They don't say wrong things about girls.

T: A lot of you work also, right? [Student], you work in a restaurant. There a lot of boys and girls might be coming. Sometimes, even one boy and one girl would also be seen. Right? And even in groups—a group of two to three boys and two to three girls.

S4: Yes sir.

T: So have you ever seen that boy making these kinds of comments?

S4: No sir.

T: So why this is so? Why don't they comment?

S4: Because they are with the girl.

T: So why these boys who are friends with girls are not seen commenting?

S4: Because the girl knows where he lives and all!

T: No! He won't make such comments for the same girl obviously!

T2: Meaning on other girls.

S2: If he makes these comments for other girls, then this girl would break his friendship with him.

T2: OK. And what else these boys are like? The ones who are friends with girls?

S2: They are always on phone!

T2: How do you know?

S2: I have seen.

T2: OK, so probably these boys give respect to girls! What is the meaning of giving respect to girls? See, we won't ever become friends with someone who doesn't respect us. Right? Who insults us, who hits us, who looks at us in the wrong way, or who stares at us in places where we don't want them to look! Would we be ever able to befriend such a person?

Boys: No

T2: We will become friends with someone with whom we feel respected. So girls also maybe would want to become friends with only such people and such boys who can respect them. So this thing that we pass lewd comments on girls because we want to talk to them—obviously this is a very bad idea. This would fail because we can see around us that boys who do these things do not have any female friends. Because the girl would be scared of you! So we have to understand that we need to learn to show respect towards girls. And how do we talk to girls so that they are not scared of us—that they don't need to run away from us. And they don't have to think about “what this boy might do with me, maybe he will do something wrong to me!”—so that she feels safe with that boy. We would always want to be with people with whom we feel safe. Right? If we don't feel safe with someone, we will never want to be with that person. So it is the same case with the girls. Girls are also like we are. They also want the same things as us.

T: Who amongst you wants to be friends with girls?

[Slowly and shyly almost all raised hands.]

T: Is there anyone who is presently friends with a girl?

[Six of them raised hands. One had to think hard and found one female friend.]

S2: She is school friend from my previous school.

S3: She is in my neighborhood.

S4: From where I live.

S5: From my last school.

T: So we would want to stay friends with them right. [He summarizes the conversation above to show that boys can sustain their friendships if they are respectful and behave well.]

.....

T: And what were we talking about now?

S2: That girls would want to be friends with what kind of boys.

S5: Like with good boys.

T: And more importantly, what kind of boys they will not befriend. What do we see around us?

S2: The ones who harass girls, who smoke, who drink.

T: First of all, an unmannered boy. Never will be friend with a batameez boy!

S6: But they are!

S2: When girl doesn't know what he is actually like.

T2: So how long will that friendship last? Now she doesn't know, but for how long she won't know.

S5: Eventually she will get to know.

S6: There is a boy like that near my house.

T: Even if it is about us, how long will we tolerate such a person? One day we will break friendship with him. So who will the girl rather be with?

S6: With a good boy.

T: Who is a good boy?

S6: The one who respects girl.

T: How do we respect a girl? What does it mean to respect a girl?

S2: Who talks respectfully, and never uses wrong words for her.

S5: Not just for her, but for anybody.

Boys: Yes, for everybody.

S1: Look at everybody with good intentions.

T: Even when we look at our friendships, we don't say rude or disrespectful things to each other, especially when the friendship is new. When it's old, maybe we sometimes are rude to our friends, but when it's new friendship, we don't do that.

T2: And when it's new friendship, we try to know each other. We try to understand the life of each other. Same is with girls. If we want to be friends with girls, we will have to try and understand their life. This will naturally happen when we become friends with someone. So what is her life in her house. What happens when she goes out of house. Everything. We need to learn to look at girls as humans, as people, like we look at our other friends. OK. Any comment about your plays? Anything that was interesting for anyone?

S2: The bit about convincing other boy.

T2: What about that?

T: He is saying when they were convincing other boys.

T2: No. So, what was interesting in that?

S2: That maybe if we do it like this [referring to convincing one], maybe it will be successful.

S1: That if one other boy understands.

T: Then it might stop. OK.

T2: So, in this entire session, we were working on one thing: who do we want to become? We want to be the one who is harassing, we want to be the one who is convincing other boys to stop, or if we want to be the one who watches silently. Each of these have their own positioning. Each of these people have a certain type of life, and a certain type of relationship with women in their life. So we were talking about this. We will think more about this, but end our discussion here. And from next class, pick up a new topic.

- At the end of the session let the boys do some quiet reflective writing. Ask them to imagine the kind of boy they want to be. Ask for volunteers to share their writing with everyone. Teacher should refrain from judgemental comments here.

Homework

Ask boys to finish their reflective writing and elaborate on what they have written, giving reasons for why they want to be who they want to be.

Lesson 24 | Imagining a fairer, gender just world

Objective

- To help boys imagine a gender just world
- To help boys see how this will be good for everyone
- To continue to build a sense of empathy
- To continue to build a sense of fairness in boys

Method

- Critical Dialogues

Duration

- 60 minutes

Activity

- Teacher should do a recap of the previous lesson and then ask the boys to present their homework.
- She should then reflect upon the many discussions they have had with their sisters about their lives and the discriminations they face. After a preliminary discussion, she should remind them that over the course of their sessions together they have also imagined several possibilities and strategies which could change things so that life is better for all of them.
- She should then ask them to break up into small groups and make three lists: one in which they write how girls should change, one in which they write how boys should change, and one in which they write about how society and its institutions should change.

- Teacher should discuss each group's list and, after all of them have presented, she should prepare a consolidated class list which should be put on the board for a whole class discussion. The teacher's goal should be to help the boys see how a gender just world is good for everyone.
- For example, in our dialogue the list that finally emerged was as follows:

Girls

- Should be independent
- Should be self-confident
- Should be well-educated
- Should know their rights
- Should save money for their own future
- Should make their own decisions about when to marry
- Should know their reproductive rights and decide when and how many children they want to have
- Should have the right to choose their own husband
- Should have the right to choose their clothing
- Shouldn't marry someone who asks for dowry
- Should learn not to be sacrificial goats
- Should be bold and learn to protect themselves
- Should have access to mobile phones, computers, scooters, bikes, etc.
- Should ask for their property rights

Boys

- Shouldn't harass girls
- Should share domestic chores
- Shouldn't drink
- Shouldn't ask for dowry
- Should change their mindset about "manhood" and manliness
- Should learn to give property rights to girls
- Should stand up for girls
- Should learn not to be violent with wives/sisters or children
- Should not bully their sisters
- Should not be afraid to express themselves if they feel like crying or are afraid
- Should share family decisions with their wives
- Should share family responsibility with their wives

Society

- No caste system
- Inter-caste and inter-religious marriages should be allowed and accepted
- Marriage should be a matter of choice

- Legal age of marriage should be 25 years for both boys and girls (or after one is independent)
 - No patrilocality; the married couple should live on their own in their own house
 - Boys and girls should together take care of their parents
 - Taking husband's surname should be optional
 - Everybody should speak up, even in other's family affairs
 - Equal age, height, earnings, etc. at marriage
 - Respect transgender
 - Break out of society's mold
- Teacher can play the following game with the students: Teacher asks for two volunteers: one plays a girl and the other one plays himself. Teacher should make up a story about a male child and a female child born in the same house, highlighting the different treatments each receives. Everytime the teacher narrates an instance of discrimination against girls, the girl takes a step back and the boy takes a step forward. Let the story go on to the adulthood of each, when boys get jobs and their parents' property, and girls are married off early, have many children, and their health wastes away. Let the class then see how far ahead the boy is and how far behind the girl is. Teacher should point out that the disadvantages they have listed out and the ones they have depicted in their story have a huge impact on girls' lives, their sisters, and their mothers' lives. Is this fair?
 - Teacher should then ask the students to make up another story based on the discussions they have had with their sisters, on the class discussion, and on the list they have jointly developed about a fairer world. Play this game again and see where the boy and girl are in this race. Is there still as large a gap?
 - Teacher's goal is to make boys see how a gender just world is a desirable thing and perfectly achievable. Everyone gains.

Homework

Share this with your family members.

Front cover photo credit: Moni Kannaujia