

Bholi

Summary: This story is about a girl who is ugly and who stammers. As she is different from her siblings, she does not get proper care in her family. Her father sends her to a school because of a command from the tehsildar. The teacher in the school becomes the true mentor of Bholi and helps her gain some confidence. Time flies and with that Bholi becomes a young woman who is educated; unlike her sisters. Because of her ugly looks and pockmarked face, her father agrees to marry her off to a person who is double her age. Bholi agrees with her parents' decision. But when the bridegroom arrives he demands a hefty dowry to marry her. Her father somehow manages that money. Bholi is aghast at this development and decides to rebel against all. She decides to spend rest of her life to serve her parents and to teach in the school.

Question 1: Bholi had many apprehensions about going to school. What made her feel that she was going to a better place than her home?

Answer: The day she was going to school forced her parents to dress her nicely. She was bathed and her hair was properly done. Until then she was not being taken care of. The special treatment she received made her feel that she was going to a better place.

Question 2: How did Bholi's teacher play an important role in changing the course of her life?

Answer: Bholi's teacher talked affectionately with Bholi. This gave her the required confidence. Moreover, teacher's appreciation and encouragement helped her overcome her low morale.

Question 3: Why did Bholi at first agree to an unequal match? Why did she later reject the marriage? What does this tell us about her?

Answer: This is normal practice in India that girls seldom oppose their parent's choice for a groom. The upbringing of daughters brings a kind of mental conditioning which doesn't give them enough courage to rebel against their parent's wishes. Bholi more or less followed the tradition of being an ideal Indian girl. Later on when the prospective groom bared his greed to everyone it repulsed Bholi and made her reject the marriage. This incident highlights the fact that education does produce some

positive effects in terms of sense of empowerment. Unlike her sisters Bholi is educated and has a mind of her own. She is as independent as any modern girl of a big city.

Question 4: Bholi's real name is Sulekha. We are told this right at the beginning. But only in the last but one paragraph of the story is Bholi called Sulekha again. Why do you think she is called Sulekha at that point in the story?

Answer: The word Bholi means a simpleton. Throughout the story she had been a simpleton hardly expressing her opinion. The word Sulekha means the person with beautiful sense of letters. In this story this word has a larger meaning of being a literate, intelligent and mature individual. After her education Bholi has really changed to Sulekha and her assertion during marriage is her announcement to the world that she is no more a Bholi but Sulekha.