

CHAPTER-5

WOMEN CHANGE THE WORLD

EXCECISES:

1. How do you think stereotypes, about what women can or cannot do, affect women's right to equality?

Answer: Stereotypes about what women can or cannot do affect women's right to equality because they are termed weak and incapable of doing strong work. It is because of this reason that women are called inferior to men. They are paid fewer salaries/ wages than their men counterparts.

2. List one reason why learning the alphabet was so important to women like Rashsundari Devi, Ramabai, and Rokeya.

Answer: Learning the alphabet was so important to these women because only after that they became able to write stories, letters, and autobiographies which described their own experiences of inequality.

3. "Poor girls drop out of school because they are not interested in getting an education". Re-read the last paragraph on page 62 and explain why this statement is not true.

Answer: This statement, "Poor girl's dropout of school education" is not true because of the following reasons:

1. There are no facilities in rural areas, especially in Adivasi areas.
2. Not even proper schools.
3. No teacher in the schools on regular basis.
4. No schools near their homes.
5. No transport facilities if the schools are far away.
6. Families too poor to afford schooling expenses.
7. Discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, religion or sex.
8. Preference for boys for education and not girls.

4. Can you describe two methods of struggle that the women's movement used to raise issues? If you had to organize a struggle against stereotypes, about what women can or cannot do, what method would you employ from the ones that you have read about? Why would you choose this particular method?

Answer:

Two methods of struggle that the women's movement used

1. **Campaigning:** To fight discrimination and violence against women. Women groups spoke against dowry deaths, sexual harassment. Laws were formulated in 1997 to protect women against sexual harassment. Anti dowry laws were passed in the 1980's.
2. **Raising awareness:** It is an important part to raise public awareness about women's rights issues. Public rallies, demonstrations were the methods used.
3. We would use raising awareness. This way we will be able to let people know about the discrimination and gather their support raising awareness.
4. It is a creative and positive way of expressing the views and thoughts of people on the concerned issues and involving more people.
5. This way the people who are clueless about women's problems or are unaware would also be involved.

2 MARK QUESTIONS:

1. What is the percentage of women engaged in agricultural work in our country?

Answer: 83.6% of women are engaged in agricultural work.

2. What does agricultural work mean to these women?

Answer: Planting, weeding, harvesting, and threshing.

3. When we think of a farmer we only think of a man. Why?[V. Imp.]

Answer: It is because a major portion of the agricultural work is done by man. Women only assist them.

4. Why was Ramabai given the title 'Pandita'?

Answer: It was because she could read and write Sanskrit. It was a remarkable achievement as women were not allowed such knowledge in those days.

5. How did women support men in the pottery trade?

Answer: They collected the mud and prepared the earth for the pots.

6. Mention any one stereotype about what women can or cannot do?

Answer: Women can be good teachers but they are incapable of dealing with technical things.

7. How did Laxmi Lakra break the stereotype that only men could be engine drivers?

Answer: She became the first woman engine driver for Northern Railways.

8. What changes came to be seen with the emergence of new ideas about education and learning in the 19th century?

Answer: Schools became more common and communities that had never learnt reading and writing started sending their children to school.

9. Who was Rashsundari Devi? What did she write in her autobiography?

Answer: Rashsundari Devi was a housewife from a rich landlord's family in west Bengal. She wrote about her everyday life experiences in her autobiography.

10. What did Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain do for the girls?

Answer: She started a school for girls in Kolkata which is functioning even today.

11. Mention any two reasons why many girls do not continue their education.

Answer: Poverty and discrimination are the two major reasons why many girls do not continue their education.

12. What is the purpose of conducting a census every 10 years? [V. Imp.]

Answer: Census is held every 10 years to count the whole population of the country. It also gathers detailed information about the people living in India—their age, schooling, what work they do, and so on.

13. What is meant by the Women's Movement?[Imp.]

Answer: Women as a whole struggled for a long to bring out all-round improvement in women's condition. This is known as the Women's Movement.

14. What happened to Satyarani's daughter?

Answer: Her daughter was murdered for Dowry.

15. What are the various means to spread awareness among the common mass?

Answer: Street plays, songs, and public meetings.

16. When is International Women's Day celebrated?

Answer: International Women's Day is celebrated on 8 March every year.

17. What do women do on International Women's Day?

Answer: Women all over the world come together to celebrate the auspicious day and renew their struggles.

4 MARK QUESTIONS:

1. Give a brief life sketch of Laxmi Lakra

Answer: Laxmi Lakra belongs to a poor tribal family in Jharkhand- She studied in a government school. She studied hard and did well and then went on to get a diploma in electronics. She then took the railway board exam and passed it on her first attempt. She became the first woman engine driver for Northern Railways.

In this way, she broke the stereotype that engine drivers could be men only. She says "I have challenges and the moment somebody says it is not for girls. I make sure I go ahead and do it". Laxmi has had to do this several times in her life—when she wanted to take electronics, when she rode motorcycles at the polytechnics and when she decided to become an engine driver.

2. Who set up a Mission in Khedgaon near Pune in 1898? How did the Mission prove beneficial for the women?

Ans. Pandita Ramabai set up a Mission in Khedgaon near Pune in 1898. This was the place where widows and poor women were encouraged not only to become literate but to be independent. They were taught a variety of skills from carpentry to running a printing press, skills that are considered a male preserve. This Mission is still active today and does a lot for women's upliftment.

3. Was Rashsundari Devi a superstitious woman? If not, why not?

Answer: Rashsundari Devi was a housewife from a rich landlord's family in West Bengal. She was not allowed to learn to read and write. During her time, some 200 years ago, there was a prevalent belief that if a woman learnt to read and write, she

would bring bad luck to her husband. Rashsundari Devi took this belief as false because she was not at all superstitious.

She took a strict decision and taught herself how to read and write in secret, well after her marriage. She even wrote her autobiography in Bangla at the age of 60. Her book titled *Amor Jiban* is the first known autobiography written by an Indian woman.

4. Although the literacy rates have increased since independence, what remains the worrying factor with respect to gender?[V. Imp.]

Answer: It is true that literacy rates have increased since independence. According to the 1961 census, about 40% of all boys and men were literate compared to 15% of all girls and women. In the census of 2001, these figures have grown to 76% for boys and men and 54% for girls and women. This means that the proportion of both men and women who are able to read and have at least some amount of schooling has increased. But the worrying factor is that the percentage of the male is still higher than the female group. The gap exists even today.

5. Why was Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain stopped from learning Bangla and English? How did she manage to learn these languages?

Answer: In those days, English was seen as a language that would expose girls to new ideas, which people thought were not correct for them. Therefore, it was mostly boys who were taught English. However, Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain wished to learn these two languages in addition to Urdu. Fortunately, she got the support of her elder brother and an elder sister and ultimately learnt to read and write Bangla and English.

7 MARK QUESTIONS:

1. Who wrote the story *Sultana's Dream*? What is the story all about?

Answer: It was Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain who wrote the story *Sultana's Dream* in 1905 at the age of 25. The story is all about Sultana's dream. In her imagination, she reaches a place called Ladyland. Ladyland is the place where women had the freedom to study, work, and create inventions like controlling rain from the clouds and flying air cars. In this Ladyland, the men had no freedom at all.

They had been sent to seclusion. Their aggressive guns and other weapons of war defeated by the brain-power of women. As Sultana travels in the Ladyland, She awakes suddenly and becomes disappointed to see the reality.

2. What are the various ways women apply to fight discrimination and seek justice? [V. Imp.]

Answer: The various ways women apply to fight discrimination and seek justice are as follow:

(a) It has proved to be a great success. It has led to a new law being passed in 2006. This law gives legal protection to women against domestic violence which includes physical and msptrijjj.. violence within then- homes.

Women by dint of campaigning made the Supreme Court formulate guidelines in 1997 to protect women against sexual harassment at workplace. They also campaigned for bringing justice to those families which have become pray to dowry deaths. As a result of their campaigns, dowry laws were changed to punish families who seek dowry.

(b) Raising Awareness. Women, in order to fight-discrimination, work hard to raise public awareness on women's rights issues. They do so through several means such as street plays, songs, and public meetings.

(c) Whenever a law or policy acts against the interest of the women, they rise in protest by holding public rallies and demonstrations. These are powerful ways of drawing attention to injustices.

(d) Showing Solidarity. Women associated with the Women's movement also believe in showing solidarity with other women and their causes.

3: Explain the significant role played by women in various socio-political movements throughout history. Provide examples and discuss the impact of their contributions on societal change.

Answer: Women have been instrumental in numerous socio-political movements, such as the suffragette movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. One prominent example is the activism of Emmeline Pankhurst and the Women's Social and Political Union in the UK, fighting for women's right to vote. Their relentless protests, hunger strikes, and civil disobedience tactics pressured governments to

grant suffrage to women. Similarly, in India, figures like Sarojini Naidu and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay played pivotal roles in the Indian independence movement. Their advocacy for women's rights and their participation in civil disobedience campaigns highlighted the importance of gender equality in nation-building.

4: Discuss the contributions of women in the field of science and innovation. Highlight the achievements of at least two women scientists, their breakthroughs, and their impact on the scientific community.

Answer: Women have made significant strides in the field of science despite historical barriers. For instance, Marie Curie's groundbreaking research on radioactivity not only earned her two Nobel Prizes in Physics and Chemistry but also laid the foundation for modern physics and medical advancements. Her discoveries in radiation therapy revolutionized cancer treatment. Additionally, Rosalind Franklin's critical work on X-ray diffraction images of DNA played a crucial role in elucidating the structure of DNA, a key contribution often overshadowed. Her findings were instrumental in the eventual discovery of the DNA double helix by Watson and Crick.

5: Identify and discuss the challenges faced by women in today's society. Analyze the socio-economic, cultural, and political hurdles hindering gender equality and propose measures to address these challenges.

Answer: Despite advancements, women continue to face multifaceted challenges in contemporary society. Economic disparities, limited access to education, workplace discrimination, and gender-based violence are prevalent issues. Socio-cultural norms often restrict women's autonomy and participation in decision-making processes. Political underrepresentation further exacerbates these challenges. To address these issues, measures such as implementing stringent anti-discrimination laws, providing inclusive education, promoting women's leadership roles, and fostering a cultural shift towards gender equality through awareness campaigns and advocacy are crucial steps forward.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. What was the primary focus of the Women's Movement?

- a) Economic reforms
- b) Political dominance
- c) Advocacy for women's rights
- d) Religious liberation

Answer: c) Advocacy for women's rights

2. In the story of Rashsundari Devi, why did she face challenges in learning to read and write?

- a) Lack of interest
- b) Cultural restrictions
- c) Family opposition
- d) Educational limitations

Answer: b) Cultural restrictions

3. What did Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain dream about in her story "Sultana's Dream"?

- a) A world without men
- b) A place for women's empowerment
- c) Advanced technological inventions
- d) All of the above

Answer: b) A place for women's empowerment

4. Which social groups in the census were observed to have higher rates of children leaving school?

- a) Upper caste
- b) Muslim community
- c) Urban populations
- d) All of the above equally

Answer: b) Muslim community

5. What major issue did the women's movement address in the 1980s?

- a) Gender-neutral laws
- b) Educational reforms
- c) Dowry deaths
- d) Economic empowerment

Answer: c) Dowry deaths

Women Change the World Summary:

The NCERT Class 7 Social and Political Life – II Chapter 5 talks about the following topics:

1. Who does the work?
2. Fewer opportunities and rigid expectations
3. Learning for change
4. Schooling and education today
5. Women's movement
6. Campaigning

‘Social and Political Life – II’ is an important book for Class 7 Social Science subject. Apart from this chapter, the full set of [NCERT Solutions for Class 7 Social Science](#) is given in the linked article.