

CHAPTER-4

GROWING UP AS BOYS AND GIRLS

EXCECISES:

1. Are the statements given below true or false? Support your answer with the use of an example :

- (a) All societies do not think similarly about the roles that boys and girls play.**
- (b) Our society does not make distinctions between boys and girls when they are growing up.**
- (c) Women who stay at home do not work.**
- (d) The work that women do is less valued than that of men.**

Answer: (a) It is a true statement. In most societies, the work boys do is given more importance than the work girls do.

(b) It is a false statement. Our society makes distinctions between boys and girls even while they are in growing phase. From the very early age, boys are taught to be tough and serious, while girls are taught to be mild and soft. Boys are given toys like cars, guns to play with while girls are given dolls.

(c) It is a false statement. Women, who stay at home, do a lot of household chores. They cook food, wash clothes, sweep floor, and numerous other works; some of which are very strenuous.

(d) It is true statement. Women do a lot of work. The main responsibility for housework and care-giving tasks lies with women. Yet, the work that they do with the home is not recognised as work. It is assumed that this is something that comes naturally to women. It, therefore, does not have to be paid for. This is the main reason why our society devalues women's work.

2. Housework is invisible and unpaid work.

Housework is physically demanding.

Housework is time-consuming.

Write in your own words what is meant by the terms 'invisible', 'physically demanding' and 'time-consuming'? Give one example of each based on the household tasks undertaken by women in your home.

Answer:

1. 'Invisible' means the work which is not seen from eyes, for example, the amount of time and labour that goes in preparing food.

2. 'Physically demanding' means we have to do hard manual labour to complete a task. It is tiring and the hard work tells on one's health, like fetching water or firewood in rural areas.
3. 'Time-consuming' means the work which needs considerable time to be completed.
 - The care of the house and keeping a watch on the activities of domestic help are invisible.
 - Washing of clothes is physically demanding.
 - Cooking food and cleaning the house is time-consuming.

3. Make a list of toys and games that boys typically play and another for girls. If there is a difference between the two lists, can you think of some reasons why this is so? Does this have any relationship to the roles children have to play as adults?

Answer: List of toys and games that boys play with: cars, guns, swords, buses, railway trains, lions, etc. (toys), cricket, kabaddi, hockey, football etc. (games). List of toys and games that girls play with: dolls, cooking items, etc. (toys)', badminton, table-tennis, hide and seek, etc. (games).

These games are also played by the boys. From the above description we can infer that there is a difference between the toys with which boys play and the toys with which girls play.

The reason behind this is that our society makes clear distinctions between boys and girls. Boys are taught to be tough while girls are taught to be mild. Boys are expected to do works which highlight their manly features but girls are expected to remain in limit with all feminine virtues. All these are ways of telling children that they have specific roles to play when they grow up to be men and women. Later in life this affects even the subjects they can study or the careers they can choose.

4. If you have someone working as a domestic help in your house or locality talk to her and find out a little bit more about her life – Who are her family members? Where is her home? How many hours does she work? How much does she get paid? Write a small story based on these details.

Answer:

Yes, A Domestic Help

1. Sujata is a domestic help. She works in our neighbour's house.
2. Two sons, one daughter, her husband, and herself are her family members.
3. Her home is in Rajiv Camp in Jhilmil Colony, Delhi-110095.
4. She works for 10 hours continuously.

5. She is paid ₹ 1500 per month.

2 MARK QUESTIONS:

1. What was a very important activity on the Samoan islands in the 1920s?

Answer: Fishing was a very important activity on the Samoan Islands in the 1920s.

2. How was the girls' school in Madhya Pradesh in the 1960s designed differently from the boys' school?

Answer: Girls' school had a central courtyard where girls played in total seclusion and safety from the outside world. The boys school had no such courtyard.

3. As these girls walked on the streets, they looked so purposeful'. What does the word 'purposeful' refer to?

Answer: Their only intention was to get home safe and as soon as possible.

4. Why do we give boys and girls different toys to play with? [V. Imp.]

Answer: We want to tell them that they will have different futures when they become men and women.

5. What do we teach boys and girls in their early childhood? [Imp.]

Answer: We teach boys that they need to be tough and masculine. On the contrary, we, teach girls that they need to be soft and mild.

6. Why did Harmeet develop a notion that her mother did not work?

Answer: In our societies, the work that women do within the home is not recognised as work. It is assumed that this is something that comes naturally to women. It is therefore, Harmeet developed such notions and said that her mother did not work

7. Why are the wages of domestic workers usually low? [V. Imp.]

Answer: It is because the work that domestic workers do does not have much value.

8. What is the daily schedule of a domestic worker?

Answer: A domestic worker's day usually begins at five in the morning and ends at twelve in the night.

9. How are domestic workers treated by their employers? [V. Imp.]

Answer: Domestic workers are often not treated well by their employers. Despite the hard work they do, their employers often do not show them much respect.

10. What do you mean by the term 'double burden'? [Imp.]

Answer: Several women today work both inside and outside the home. This is often referred to as 'double burden'.

11. Housework commonly involves many different tasks. Name some of them.

Answer: Washing clothes, cleaning, sweeping, cooking, etc.

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

Answer: Girls like to go to school together in groups because in a group they feel secured.

4 MARK QUESTIONS:

1. What did boys do every evening, once the school was over?

Answer: Every evening, once the school was over, boys watched as hundreds of school girls crowded the narrow streets. The girls walked on the streets in groups and their only intention was to get straight home. On the contrary, the boys used the streets as a place to stand around idling, to play, and to try out tricks with their bicycles. They never reached home in time.

2. Why does our society devalue the work women do inside the home? [V. Imp.]

Answer: Women discharge a lot of responsibilities inside their home. They look after the family, especially children, the elderly and sick members. They manage the entire activities so efficiently. They cook food by standing for hours in front of hot stoves, wash clothes, maintain cleanliness, etc. In rural areas, women and girls carry heavy headloads of firewood. These works are not considered as real works in our families and societies. The work that women do within the home is not recognised as work. It is assumed that this is something that comes naturally to women. Due to this fact, it does not have to be paid for. Our society devalues such work.

3. Our constitution does not discriminate between male and female. But the inequality between the sexes exists. What does the government do to remedy the situation? [Imp.]

Answer: The government recognises that the burden of childcare and housework falls on women and girls. This naturally has an impact on whether girls can attend school. It determines whether women can work outside the house and what kind of jobs and careers they can have. The government has set up Anganwadis or child-care centers in several villages in the country.

It has passed laws that make it mandatory for organizations that have more than 30 women employees to provide creche facilities. The provision of creches helps many women to take up employment outside the home. Girls have also been benefited through this provision. More and more girls now have started attending schools.

7 MARK QUESTIONS:

1. Give an account of growing up in Samoa in the 1920s.

Answer: A research took place on Samoan society in the 1920s. According to the reports of the research, Samoan children did not go to school. They engaged in many different activities. They learned from their elders how to take care of children or do housework. Fishing was an important activity on the Samoan islands. Young people learned to undertake long fishing expeditions.

Both boys and girls used to look after their younger siblings. But, by the time a boy was about nine years old, he joined the older boys in learning outdoor jobs like fishing and planting coconuts. Girls had to continue looking after small children or do errands for adults until they were teenagers. They enjoyed much freedom during the teenage. After the age of fourteen or so, girls also went on fishing trips, worked in the plantations, learned how to weave baskets. Boys had to do most of the work associated with cooking. After they prepared the meal, the girls helped them.

2. Write a brief note on the lives of domestic workers with an example. [V. Imp.]

Answer: The lives of domestic workers are full of hardships. They do a lot of work in the employer's house. They sweep and clean, wash clothes and dishes, cook different varieties of food, look after young children or the elderly. Their day usually begins at five in the early morning and ends at twelve in the night. During this span, they do not sit even for a while.

Most domestic workers are women. Sometimes, even young boys and girls are employed to do all these works. Despite the hard work they do, their employers often do not show them much respect. They are often scolded by them even at a minor mistake. So far their wages are concerned, they are very low.

The reason behind this is that domestic work does not have much value. Melani is a domestic worker who leads a very hard life in spite of her hard labour. Her employer is not at all sympathetic to her. She shouts at her every now and then. She does not give her sufficient food to eat. Even during severe winters, she does not allow her to wear chappals in the house. Melani feels very humiliated. As she has no other option, she has to bear all the hardships. But she, like her employer, also wishes to be respected.

3: Explain the concept of gender roles and their impact on society. Discuss how these roles have evolved over time.

Answer: Gender roles refer to societal expectations and norms about how individuals should behave, think, and act based on their gender. Historically, these roles have been rigidly defined, with prescribed behaviors and responsibilities for boys and girls. For instance, boys were expected to be assertive, strong, and career-oriented, while girls were encouraged to be nurturing, domestic, and passive. However, over time, societal changes, including movements advocating for gender equality, have challenged these traditional roles. Today, there's greater recognition that individuals should not be limited by societal expectations based on gender. The evolving understanding of gender roles acknowledges that everyone should have equal opportunities regardless of their gender identity. This shift has resulted in more diverse expressions of gender identity and has prompted changes in societal norms, encouraging inclusivity and acceptance.

4: Discuss the importance of gender equality in education. Explain how access to education contributes to breaking gender stereotypes and promoting social development.

Answer: Gender equality in education is crucial for fostering a more equitable society. When both boys and girls have equal access to education, it helps break down gender stereotypes by demonstrating that intellectual capabilities are not confined by gender. It provides opportunities for both genders to explore diverse subjects, interests, and career paths, challenging traditional notions of what boys and girls should pursue. Moreover, education empowers individuals to critically analyze societal norms, fostering a mindset of inclusivity and respect for diversity.

By educating both genders equally, societies can benefit from a broader range of perspectives and talents, leading to enhanced social development and innovation.

5: Examine the challenges faced by adolescents in understanding and navigating gender identity. How can society support adolescents in this phase?

Answer: Adolescence is a critical phase where individuals explore and develop their identity, including their gender identity. During this period, adolescents might face challenges related to societal expectations, peer pressure, and self-acceptance regarding their gender identity. Society can support adolescents by fostering an inclusive environment that encourages open dialogue and understanding of diverse gender identities. Schools and communities can implement education programs that promote acceptance and respect for individuals regardless of their gender expression. Providing access to counseling and support groups can also offer a safe space for adolescents to explore their gender identity without fear of judgment. Moreover, encouraging positive role models and representation of diverse gender identities in media and society helps adolescents feel validated and accepted.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. In societies like Samoa in the 1920s, what was a common practice regarding children's responsibilities?

- a) Boys were responsible for household chores.
- b) Girls went on fishing expeditions at a young age.
- c) Boys and girls both looked after younger siblings.
- d) Girls joined older boys for outdoor jobs at the age of nine.

Answer: c) Boys and girls both looked after younger siblings.

2. In Madhya Pradesh in the 1960s, what was a notable difference between boys' and girls' schools?

- a) Boys and girls attended school together.
- b) Girls' schools had courtyards for playing, while boys' schools did not.

c) Boys' schools were designed for total seclusion.

d) Girls' schools had bigger playgrounds attached.

Answer: b) Girls' schools had courtyards for playing, while boys' schools did not.

3. What is the primary point highlighted regarding toys given to children?

a) Boys are given dolls and girls are given cars.

b) Toys are irrelevant in shaping children's future roles.

c) Toys play a role in differentiating future roles based on gender.

d) All toys are considered equal in societal perception.

Answer: c) Toys play a role in differentiating future roles based on gender.

4. What was the primary concern of domestic workers like Melani in their workplaces?

a) Inadequate salary

b) Excessive workload

c) Lack of respect and mistreatment

d) Poor working conditions

Answer: c) Lack of respect and mistreatment

5. According to the data from Haryana and Tamil Nadu, what do the work hours suggest about gender disparity?

a) Men work longer hours than women.

b) Men and women have equal work hours.

c) Women work longer hours than men.

d) Work hours are not different between genders.

Answer: c) Women work longer hours than men.

Growing up as Boys and Girls Summary:

The NCERT Class 7 Social and Political Life – II Chapter 4 talks about the following topics:

1. Growing up in Samoa in the 1920s
2. Growing up male in Madhya Pradesh in the 1960s
3. Lives of domestic workers
4. Women's work and equality

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.