



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. It means the work that is not seen from our eyes. For example, the main responsibility for housework and care-giving tasks, like looking after the family, especially children, the elderly and sick members, lies with women. There are such works or tasks which are often not recognised as works and therefore remain invisible.

2. Physically demanding. Very tough and difficult tasks. For example, women do a lot of work inside the home. Some of these works such as carrying heavy headloads of firewood, fetching water from a far-off place, washing clothes of the entire family members etc. are very tough and difficult. Still women do them regularly without making any complaints.

3. Time-consuming. Household works that take much time. For example, women's routine begins from early morning and continues upto late night. During this period they are seen busy in fulfilling the needs and wishes of their family member. They often sit with their children and help them in completing their homework. This is a good example of time-consuming work.

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: Sharda has been working in my house for several years as a domestic help. She hails from a small village in West Bengal. She lives here in Delhi with her husband and one daughter who is in her teens. She comes to my house in the early morning at 5.30 and gets retire from the days work in the night at 8 p.m. In between she goes to her house for tw hours. She does every work very efficiently and skilfully. She never gives a moment of complains. Due to this fact we have developed a very cordial relations with her and her family. We regard her as our family member. We also pay her handsome amount. She gets Rs. 3000/- per month with all other facilities like foods, clothes, medicines, etc. Her husband is a rickshaw puller who also manages to earn a good amount everyday. Thus, Sharda leads a very happy life with us and her family members.

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