

2.2 Nature Created Man and Woman as Equals

WARMING UP

(A) Study the pictures below and note down the differences.



Differences

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Differences

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(B) Now write what you observe in the following two pictures.



(C) Which pictures reflect gender equality? Write their numbers.

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(D) Write down any two Slogans on 'Gender Equality'.

(1)

(2)

Nature Created Man and Woman as Equals

The house and its surroundings are a sight of peace in the early morning of April. It **nestles** by the side of a small stream of crystal-clear water. The stream tumbles down the green mountains only two miles or so away. There is a stretch of hundreds of acres of fertile land **rolling** with yellow mustard flowers, between the mountain range and the house. A garden is in front of the house. Trees of many kinds bearing flowers of various hues and fruits grow on all sides of the house.

The courtyard smells of jasmine which blooms in bunches of white pearls. The **fragrance** mingles with the thin smoke that rises from sweet smelling incense sticks. The burning incense sticks are glowing at the altar of God in the middle of the courtyard.

Ashangbi is in her reading-room and is busy writing an article. She is a middle-aged mother of three children and a journalist and woman's rights activist. Lanthoi, her youngest daughter, enters the room. She is an intelligent girl. Today she looks thoughtful and she takes a seat by her mother's side. At the sight of her child, Ashangbi lovingly asks, "Have you finished your study, my dear?" "Yes, mother, I finished it last night. Today being Sunday, I want to do something interesting." Lanthoi says and waits for her mother's response. "Tell me what you want to do," Ashangbi asks her quite amused. "Mother, tomorrow I'm going to represent the Siroi Lily House as a speaker in a **symposium** at our school. The topic is 'God Created Men and Women As Equals'. Will you spare some time to have a discussion with me?" Lanthoi **presses on** her mother.

Lanthoi has just had a discussion with her father on the topic. Tomba, her father, is a husband supportive of the activities of his wife and a loving father. He is a lawyer and a social worker, who advocates the cause of women. He is always proud of his wife, the two daughters and the son. In times of need, he extends his helping hand to his wife and children and to the society at large. He does not **discriminate** between a man's work and a woman's work anywhere. He shares

● **nestles** : is close to

● **rolling** : extending in long gentle slopes

● **fragrance** : pleasant smell

◆ *Make a list of the beautiful natural surroundings of the house.*

◆ *What help did Lanthoi need from her mother?*

● **symposium** : a meeting at which experts have discussion on a particular subject

● **presses on** : persuades some one to do something

◆ *What did Lanthoi's father work as?*

● **discriminate** : treat one person or group better or worse than another, in an unfair way

◆ *In what way did Tomba contribute towards Ashangbi's success?*

- **gender** : fact of being male or female
- **laments** : expresses grief and sorrow

◆ *How did mother explain Lanthoi's topic for her speech at school?*

- **subjugated** : controlled and dominated over

◆ *How is the role of a mother honoured and praised?*

- **glorified** : praised
- **pioneer** : a person who is among the first to take up a cause especially in a new region.
- **testify** : provide proof / evidence

equally with his wife in doing the household chores like cleaning, washing, cooking and feeding the children. Had he not shared in these activities in the way he does, his wife would not have been a successful professional. He wholeheartedly believes in equality irrespective of class, religion and **gender**. In his discussion with his daughter, he **laments** over the great injustice done on women in the society, telling her, "My dear child, the world is still full of inequalities. We have to find a way to bring equality between men and women".

Her father's words are still ringing in the ears of Lanthoi. And she tells her mother of what her father has told her.

Appreciative of her husband for his views, Ashangbi says, "Your father is right. In no society do women enjoy the same opportunities enjoyed by men. It is because of your father that I feel no difference or inequality at home. But, outside our home, I have seen that women have been **subjugated** in many ways. It is against the will of God. God has sent men and women to our Earth to share the joys and sorrows of life equally, to share His blessings and to enjoy the bounty of Nature equally. This is what your topic means".

Ashangbi knows well that men and women are equal. Women, who are half of the human race, are as important as men. She writes and talks about such topics. Her daughter, though a child, also understands well that her mother is not a person of lesser quality than her father. She says, "Our home is full of love with you, mother."

The mother beams with joy at the words of her daughter. As a matter of fact, mother is the fountain of love in a family. This bond of love is beyond comparison with anything else in the world. It is because of this that motherhood has been **glorified** and women accept the challenges in life to become a mother.

Showing deep affection, Ashangbi continues, "**Pioneer** women **testify** to the equality of women with men. Actually, life is not possible without both women and men".

Lanthoi has been fascinated by the stories of pioneer women. Her grandmother had narrated many

stories of the brave queens like Linthoingambi and Kuranganayani, who were as brave as kings. There were also many brave women among the common people. These women, as her grandmother narrated, were makers of home, family, society and the nation. They were **civilizing** influences. At the same time, they were also adventurers who claimed their shares in free land, ploughed and raised crops with their own hands and drove cattle. Modern women have become mountaineers, naturalists, astronauts, scientists, soldiers and political leaders. This proves that there is nothing a woman cannot do and also that women and men were created as equals.

Then she asks her mother further, “Mother, you’ve **thrown light on** the equality of men and women and also have emphasized that the world is still an unequal world. Then, what I would like to know is if there are moral, social and **legal** provisions to enable women to express their physical and mental **potential** and to set themselves free from suppression”. Amazed at the curiosity of her daughter, Ashangbi adds :

“There are many. **Under the aegis** of the United Nations, there is a declaration for a new world of equality. It has the following **dimensions** :

- (a) equal access to basic social services including health and education,
- (b) equal participation in political and economic decision-making,
- (c) equal reward for equal work, and
- (d) **elimination** of discrimination and violence against women.”

Then the mother concluded, “My dear daughter, we can affirm along with the United Nations that men and women are equals.”

Lanthoi understands what her mother means and what the topic of the symposium means. Thus, confident of success, the next day, after thanking her mother, the girl of twelve happily rushes out of the room in the bright morning sun. The blue sky meets the range of the eastern mountains. The small girl is always fascinated by the small trail which winds up the distant purple mountain.

● **civilizing** : educating

◆ *What are the achievements of modern women?*

● **throw light on** : to give information or explanation about

● **legal** : related to law

● **potential** : the qualities that exist and can be developed

● **under the aegis** : with the protection or support of (a particular organization or person)

● **dimensions** : aspects

● **elimination** : getting rid of

◆ *What social justice does the aegis of the United Nations guarantee?*

◆ *What vision meets her eye, when Lanthoi rushes outdoors?*

◆ *What does that vision symbolize?*

1. (A) Find from the lesson words / phrases that mean the following.

- (a) colours
- (b) a person who writes for newspapers/magazines
- (c) make a difference between
- (d) cry over
- (e) explain in detail
- (f) abilities and qualities
- (g) same availability
- (h) a person who brings about a social/political change

(B) Pick out five Compound words from the lesson.

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2. Answer in your own words.

- (a) Read and write down 5 points which prove that Tomba (Lanthoi's father) firmly believes in gender equality.
- (b) In what ways is Ashangbi different from other women of her community?
- (c) What are the provisions in the Declaration of the United Nations, to ensure equality of men and women?

3. Who said to whom and when / why?

	Who said?	To whom?	When / why?
.....the world is full of inequalities.			
I want to do something interesting.			
It is against the will of God.			
Our home is full of love.....			
..... we can affirm along with United Nations that men and women are equal.			

4. We have studied in previous classes that Pronouns are words used instead of Nouns.

We also know about Personal Pronouns like I, you, he, she, my, your, his, her, they etc.

There are other words also which are used in place of nouns.

(i) This, that, these, those point to some noun.

For example : ‘This is a kingfisher.’ ‘Those are herons.’ Such Pronouns are called

Demonstrative Pronouns.

(ii) Some pronouns not only replace nouns, but also connect two sentences.

For example : ‘Biology is a science. It studies living organisms.’

Biology is a science which / that studies living organisms.

Some other such pronouns are who, whose, whom etc.

They are called **Relative Pronouns.**

(iii) Some pronouns are used to ask questions.

For example : What is your name?

Which is your coat?

Who is your coach?

The underlined words are **Interrogative Pronouns.**

Underline the Pronouns in the following sentences and name their types.

(1) What do you want to do?

(2) It is because of your father that I feel no inequality.

(3) This is what your topic means.

(4) She is fascinated by the small trail, which winds up the mountain.

5. Read the following lines. Imagine it is the beginning of an instance you have experienced. Complete the incident using your imagination. Give it a positive ending.

I had often noticed that in my neighbour’s family, the son was greatly pampered, but the daughter was treated unfairly. I could not bear this. So one day I decided to

Continue the write-up, with your own ideas, in about 12 - 15 lines.

6. Project :

From your school library or internet collect quotations / slogans promoting gender equality. Make decorative posters with pictures of outstanding women or sketches or illustrations of your choice. With permission, put up the posters in your school surroundings.

