

Mission of the Earth Charter Initiative

“To establish a sound ethical foundation for the emerging global society and to help build a sustainable world based on respect for nature, diversity, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture of peace”

Participants of the Earth Charter Initiative are students and government leaders... local organizations and international agencies ... small towns and global corporations. The Earth Charter is a **'living charter'** with the power to unite people for a common purpose: care and concern for the whole community of life.

Join the Earth Charter Initiative
by using the Earth Charter in your field of activity

Earth Charter for Delhi Schools



Department of Environment,
Government of NCT of Delhi



and
CLEAN-India,
An Initiative of Development Alternatives

Delhi Government - the first Government in India to adopt the Earth Charter principles

Endorse the Earth Charter
And help us to spread its vision of a better future for coming generations

For more information:

Please visit our web sites:
www.EarthCharter.org,
www.environment.delhigovt.nic.in
www.devalt.org
www.cleanindia.in

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prithvi apna ghar



Earth Charter Module-III & IV



THE EARTH CHARTER

MODULE - III & IV

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FOREWORD

I am happy to note that Development Alternatives has prepared Teacher's Hand Books called "Prithvi-Apna Ghar" to inculcate the principles of the Earth Charter among the students of various schools in Delhi. I have gone through the booklet, and I find that it will enable the students to understand and appreciate the various facets and environmental issues, which are affecting civilization today. The Earth Charter is a document prepared with great deal of attention and its wide spread dissemination is very important to sensitize the youth of today about the principles of Sustainable Development.

In this context, I am happy to note that children will be exposed to four broad categories of issues, which constitute our environment. These are:-

- Air, Water and Noise pollution and how to control them effectively.
- Different types of Waste Management like Solid Waste, Hazardous Waste, Bio-Medical Waste, Electronic Waste and Construction and Demolition Waste.
- The importance of preserving our bio-diversity and understanding the value of trees in our day-to-day existence.
- Climate change and its effect on global warming with the likely consequences of melting of glaciers, rising of sea levels, coastal flooding, effects on food grain production and possibilities of epidemics etc.

Ecological integrity today has become an important factor in the development process of any country and I am happy to note that the handbook in a simple and elegant manner will bring out all the issues for discussion, debate and assimilation among the students.

(J.K. Dadoo)
Secretary (E&F)

GREEN DELHI - CLEAN DELHI



SAY NO TO CRACKERS

MESSAGES FROM EARTH CHARTER INTERNATIONAL

City of Delhi, India Adopts Earth Charter Education

On the occasion of Earth Day, the Delhi Government expressed its commitment to the Earth Charter vision and launched a collaborative project with CLEAN-India (Community Led Environment Action Network), a program created by Development Alternatives (a leading Indian NGO and ECI Affiliate) to bring the Earth Charter to over 2,000 Delhi Schools. As part of this effort the Earth Charter, will be integrated into the school curriculum.

Delhi is the first Indian city to embrace the Earth Charter in this formal way, but the Charter is widely known in the country, especially among leaders in sustainability education, and its presence is growing. We look forward to more good news from India in the coming years.

**"Greetings from Earth Charter in Sao Paolo!
What wonderful timing to get this news from you.
CONGRATULATIONS!"**

Alan Atkinson
Executive Director
Earth Charter International

**"CONGRATULATIONS!! WE ARE VERY VERY HAPPY TO HEAR THIS GOOD NEWS!
we are here in Brazil having an Earth Charter meeting and
I just shared your news with many... we greet you and want to
say we will put this in the news..."**

Mirian Vilela
Director
Earth Charter Center for Education for
Sustainable Development at UPEACE
San Jose, Costa Rica

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prithvi apna ghar

Module-III & IV

**Join together to bring forth a
sustainable global society founded
on respect for nature, universal
human rights, economic justice and
a culture of peace.**

Earth Charter “Prithvi - Apna Ghar” - An Introduction



Dear Teachers

Welcome to “*Prithvi- Apna Ghar*” -Teachers Hand Books. These have been developed to assist you in introducing the Earth Charter Principles to your students. Based on the principles, issues are presented in an interesting and fun way to stimulate students to take action in their homes, schools, communities and cities and towns.

These are a series of hand books for Teachers, Youth group leaders and other educators to take the stimulating materials and incorporate in their teaching / activities. The main function is to provide ideas, wide range of activities and pedagogical approaches to convey to your students the values and guiding principles underlying “Sustainable Development”

These ideas collected from around the world will give the users inspiration and framework to plan, adapt and use by engaging the students in a process where experience, reflection, cooperation, compassion and respect are encouraged and developed.

The Earth Charter

Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society in the 21st century, created by the largest global consultation process ever associated with an International declaration. People around the world have come together from different cultures, religions and continents to participate in drafting the Charter. This remarkable document communicates a fundamental unity of people from all walks of life, from every corner of the globe, on some of the most important issues faced by us. The sixteen core principles reflect a vision for

Sustainable Development rooted in “Respect and Care for the Community of Life”.

We can't achieve a healthy environment without achieving social and economic justice and we can't achieve peace without good governance. There is an inextricable connection between all the issues. We need to work on all of them to achieve any of them.

The Earth Charter has been recognized by UNESCO as an important educational instrument for the decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which started in 2005.

The Earth Charter vision reflects the conviction that caring for people and Caring for Earth are two interdependent dimensions of one task. It challenges us to examine our values, search for common ground in the midst of our diversity and to embrace a new vision that will be shared by people in many nations and cultures throughout the world.

The objectives are to:

1. Establish a sound ethical foundation for the emerging global society and to help build a sustainable world based on respect for:
 - Nature
 - Universal human rights
 - Economic justice
 - A culture of Peace
2. Share with everyone, a certain set of ethical and moral principles which guide the behaviour of people towards the Earth and towards each other to develop a strong sense of responsible citizenship.

It is imperative that children and youth participate actively because it affects their life today and has implications for the Future. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring in unique perspectives.

Earth Charter provides a unique educational framework

- It is the result of a decade long , multicultural, global dialogue
- It helps explain the interconnectedness of economic, social and environmental spheres
- It conveys a sense of universal responsibility
- It articulates the principles for promoting a sustainable future
- It is an educational tool for developing understanding of the critical choices facing humanity

International Concern

The United Nations declared the ten-year period beginning in the year 2005 to be the *Decade of Education for Sustainable Development*. The Decade represents an international recognition of education as an indispensable element for achieving sustainable development. However, without appropriate teaching resources, this visionary political decision lacks implementation tools. These hand books seek to contribute to the implementation of the Decade- for teachers interested in bringing into the classroom their concerns for building a just and peaceful world. They attempt to respond to the needs of educators who feel that fundamental changes are needed in our teaching and learning processes.

Teachers Hand Books

The Teachers hand Books are intended to assist you in incorporating the Earth Charter principles in your teaching as well as in school activities and programmes.

They include:

- Materials that you can use to introduce the Charter Principles
- Materials and Methodology for motivating the students
- Information and data about the present status
- Relevant resource materials references
- Related web sites
- Resource Organisations and Experts
- Experience sharing from other countries

This series of hand books deal with:

1. Introduction to the Earth Charter Principles and the overarching principle of Respect and Care for the Community of Life
2. Ecological Integrity
3. Social and Economic Justice
4. Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace

These books represent the approach, methodology and activity guide that will help you plan and implement the programme successfully in your schools thus contributing towards the successful implementation of the Decade's goals of building a more just, equitable and sustainable global society.

Usha Srinivasan

PRINCIPLE 9

ERADICATE POVERTY AS AN ETHICAL, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPERATIVE.

- a. *Guarantee the right to potable water, clean air, food security, uncontaminated soil, shelter, and safe sanitation, allocating the national and international resources required.*
- b. *Empower every human being with the education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood, and provide social security and safety nets for those who are unable to support themselves.*
- c. *Recognize the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer, and enable them to develop their capacities and to pursue their aspirations.*



“Poverty is the worst form of violence.”

- Mahatma Gandhi

Poverty - Its one word with many facets and probably all are negative to deal with. Poverty is a burden passed on to the poor in the underdeveloped or developing countries. It intercepts a person from various rights and facilities which the rich enjoy. Its the greatest evil that leaves no hope for mercy. It drags thousands to become thieves, terrorists, militants and lose their dignity to support their families. Many young girls and women lead a miserable life working as prostitutes to feed their family. The rich and influential target these poor people and prosper their unscrupulous businesses like drugs through them. Many kids are forced to beg at traffic signals, work in factories and in homes as domestic help. Being too young to be heard, they are paid meagre wages and easily exploited.

While walking through the lanes of metropolitan cities we often come across a bunch of children running around in festivity; they run in the scorching sun chasing their dreams in the filth sans food, sans shelter, sans clothes

The woman who comes to your place to do the daily chores earns about Rs.2000 a month. She might have a television set, a cooler, and a refrigerator; they may seem to have everything but in fact what they have is poor sanitation, no water supply and no permanent roof which makes their life miserable in those slum clusters. Take the case of the beggar, the one you saw in the morning while coming to work. He doesn't have a permanent income, has no place to live, sleeps on the pavement and begs to buy a meal for the day. Whom would you consider poor?



Well! Both of them are struck by poverty. Though their living conditions might differ a bit, they have to undertake jobs which we will never have to do for a living.

Go to...

Visit a slum and find out about their living conditions. Visit their homes and such clusters in your city. Take their comments on poverty. Find out their problems like unsafe water, no protection against epidemic diseases, shortage of schools and teachers in the area.

Check the facilities provided to them by the government, whether they get regular ration facility, free medical camps or aid from government hospitals.

Carry out a campaign for such people. Collect clothes, old books, and stationary. Start evening schools to teach the underprivileged students of your area.

Involve parents in the drive to eradicate poverty. Make trips with family and friends to such clusters and protect their rights. Work for their upliftment.

Poverty is determined with respect to the **poverty line**.

Let's find out, "WHAT IS POVERTY LINE?"

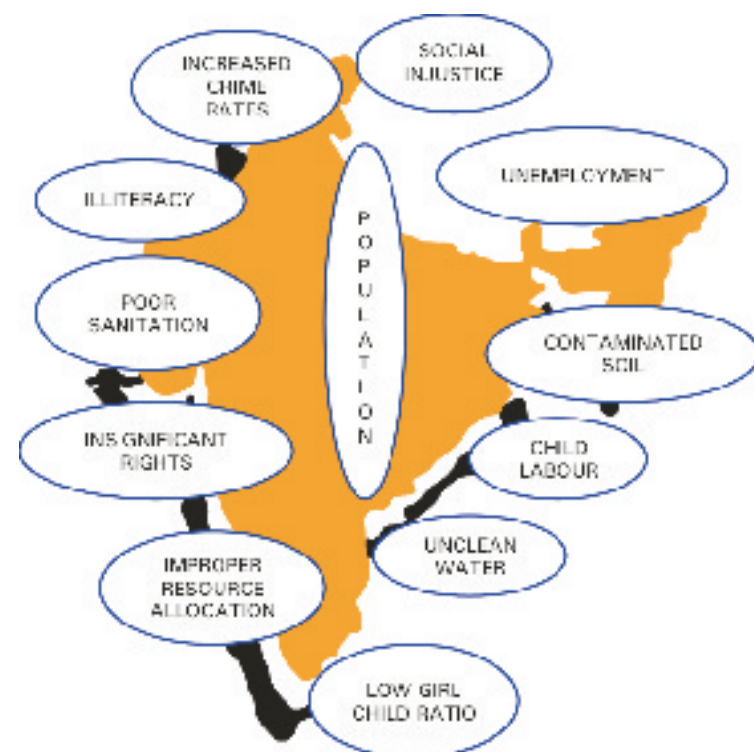
Poverty line is a cut-off point on the line of distribution, which divides the population as poor and non-poor.

The **poverty threshold**, or **poverty line**, is the minimum level of income deemed necessary to achieve an adequate standard of living.

Almost all societies have some citizens living in poverty. The poverty threshold is useful as an economic tool with which to measure poverty and consider socioeconomic reforms such as welfare and unemployment insurance to reduce poverty.

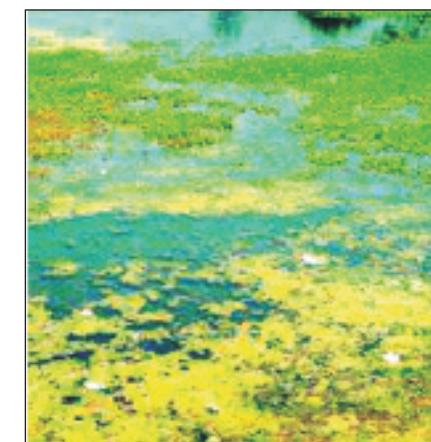
Determining the poverty line is usually done by finding the total cost of all the essential resources that an average human adult consumes in one year. This approach is needs-based in that an assessment is made of the minimum expenditure needed to maintain a tolerable life. This was the original basis of the poverty line in the United States, whose poverty threshold has since been raised due to inflation. In developing countries, the most expensive of these resources is typically the rent required to live in an apartment. Economists thus pay particular attention to the real estate market and housing prices because of their strong influence on the poverty threshold.

Let's look at some of the most important issues faced by the poor in our country...



WATER- Distribution and Quality

The problem is not with the amount of water but with its distribution, availability and reliability. Scarcity of safe drinking water is a serious issue in the slums of Indian cities. According to the World Bank, the chronic shortage of potable water threatens the social condition, sanitation and environmental protection. Slums are a general phenomena of unplanned urbanization. The growing urbanization has put tremendous pressure on the services and facilities needed for an adequate human life including clean water, sanitation and waste disposal. The number of slum dwellers has increased in the last few decades. Taking for example the city of Lucknow, according to an estimate in 1991 over 28% of the total population of Lucknow city was supposed to be residing in the slums which increased to 40% by the year 2006. A survey was conducted in the 10 major slums situated on the banks of the Gomti River with a total number of 4409 families. The survey revealed that these people were living in congested localities generally unfit for living. In these slums water facility for drinking and other use is virtually non-existent. Unsafe drinking water is causing several adverse conditions and many water borne diseases for slum dwellers. The socio-economic condition and health scenario in these localities are very dangerous. So, a study of the drinking water in slums and it's effect on the living standard of slum dwellers is needed for environmental sustainability and society.



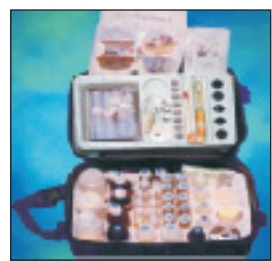
Its generally the government that get them water, supplied through water tanks once in a blue moon. The water is of the lowest standards and unfit even for bathing. You can imagine why thousands of them die from water-borne diseases. It has high amounts of arsenic, lead, sewage and lethal pathogens. Drinking a sip of this water can cause jaundice, diarrhoea, and many more diseases, which take thousands of lives each year. Thousands of people living in the clusters face the problem of inadequate water supply. The water that reaches their homes is not potable. In many parts of the country people crave for this basic need.

Another common problem is that of stagnant water. During the rainy season the water due to rains and overflowing storm-water from drains collects in puddles providing ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes and other vectors. Dirty lakes and water tanks also are breeding places for mosquitoes. They cause deadly diseases like- Malaria, Chikungunya and Dengue.

Take the first step

- Visit your nearest slum and take a note of water supply in the area.
- Conduct a survey to identify the various water-borne diseases prevalent in those clusters.
- Visit any nearby river or stream and check its condition. For eg Yamuna; it looks like a stagnant drain - black due to accumulated wastes and filth from the factories and settlements.
- Talk about the benefits of boiling water. Tell the poor and rural people about use of chlorine.
- Spread awareness about water-borne diseases, and why bathing and washing at the river should be avoided.
- The school authorities should regularly keep the water tanks cleaned and chlorinated in the schools. Water of school taps should be checked, schools should become more vigilant about maintaining the cleanliness of the water tanks; schools should also install water purification systems.

These days many government and non-government organizations are active about developing easy to use, portable devices, which check water quality. JAL-Tara is an example of such a device. It has been developed by **Developmental Alternatives** and has been extensively used in the CLEAN-India programme. It can be used to check water quality of drinking water sources and rivers. You can visit www.cleanindia.org to find out more.



Why is SANITATION important?

Sanitation incorporates disposal of solid waste and wastewater. The importance of waste isolation lies in an effort to prevent water-borne diseases, which afflicts both developed countries as well as developing countries to differing degrees. Approximately 14,000 people die each day from preventable water-borne diseases, as a result of inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene.

Poor sanitation in rural and urban areas with no education and improper knowledge of hygiene cause many deadly diseases. Without proper sewerage and insufficient waste disposal systems the areas suffer numerous problems. In the absence of public toilets, people use farms, roads and parks for such purposes. This is unhealthy for them and the surroundings as in farms, vegetable for consumption are grown and bacteria from the faeces are passed onto the vegetables.

In India only 30% of the population has access to improved sanitation. This presents substantial public health risks as the waste could contaminate drinking water and cause life threatening diseases.

Like water, air is another important source of life. Due to increasing urbanization and industrialization our surrounding air has become polluted just like the water we consume...

Are we responsible for your child's bronchitis?

Today thousands of children are fighting for their lives. Deadly diseases like Bronchitis and Asthma are taking their toll. In India every third child is striving to live against the ever-increasing air pollution.

We are responsible for the amount of pollutants present in the air. We are responsible for bringing these deadly diseases to our country, to our city and inside our home. With massive deforestation there is no scope left for replenishment of the environment.

Controlled burning practices used in agriculture and forestry management, burning wood, fireplaces, stoves, furnaces and incinerators, oil refineries, power plants and industrial activity in general, fumes from paint, hair spray, varnish, aerosol sprays and other solvents, military uses such as nuclear weapons, toxic gases, germ warfare and rocketry, smoke and carbon monoxide from wildfires, volcanic activity which produce sulphur, chlorine, and ash particulates, methane released from rice fields, use of air-conditioners and refrigerators, use of generators, which run on petrol or diesel all contribute to pollution.

How do poor people suffer from air pollution?

Those working in mines like coal, gold, lead and diamond mines suffer from severe breathing problems. Many working in marble, silicon and asbestos factories get diseases like asbestosis, fibrosis and silicosis.

Small kids working in cracker factories are also at great risk of getting diseases like bronchitis and asthma at an early age. Men and women working in tobacco factories fall victim to such diseases. Those begging or vending at traffic signals inhale the polluted air and smoke.

FOOD SECURITY

Food is essential for life. With an ever-growing population, we are not left with enough to feed everyone despite the increasing production. **Food security** describes a situation in which people do not live in hunger or fear of starvation. Two commonly used definitions of food security come from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA):

- Food security exists when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (FAO).
- Food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe food, and (2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable food in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies). (USDA)

Despite of improvement in production, processing and packaging, more poisons seem to be entering our food chain.

Under the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, an adulterant is any material which be employed for the purposes of adulteration.

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU BEEN CHEATED BY THE SHOPKEEPER ?.... let's find out

How to Test for Food Adulteration?

Food Article	Adulterant	Simple Method for Detecting the Adulterant
Milk	Water	Put a drop of milk on polished vertical surface. The drop of pure milk either stops or flows slowly leaving a white trail behind it. Milk adulterated with water will flow immediately without leaving a mark.
	Urea	Take 5 ml of milk in a test tube and add 2 drops of bromothymol blue solution. Development of blue colour after 10 minutes indicates presence of urea.
Mustard Seeds	Argemone Seeds	Argemone seeds have rough surface and mustard seeds on pressing is yellow inside while Argemone seed is white.
Ice Cream	Washing Powder	Put some lemon juice, bubbles are observed on the presence of washing powder
Sugar	Chalk	Dissolve sugar in a glass of water, chalk will settle down at the bottom.
Silver Foil	Aluminium Foil	On ignition genuine silver foil burns away completely leaving glistening white spherical ball of the same mass while aluminum foil is reduced to ashes of black-grey colour.



Honey	Water	A cotton wick dipped in pure honey burns when ignited with a match stick. If adulterated, presence of water will not allow the honey to burn or if it does will produce a crackling sound.
Coffee	Chicory	Gently sprinkle the coffee powder on surface of water in a glass. The coffee floats over the water but chicory begins to sink down within few seconds. The falling chicory powder particles leave behind them a trail of colour.
Tea leaves	Coloured leaves	Rub leaves on white paper, artificial colour comes out on paper.
	Used tea	Tea leaves sprinkled on wet filter paper. Pink or red spots on paper show adulteration.
	Iron fillings	Move a magnet through the sample. Iron will stick to the magnet.
Red Chilli Powder	Rodamine Culture	Take 2gms sample in a test tube, add 5ml of acetone. Immediate appearance of red colour indicates presence of Rodamine.
	Brick Powder	Brick powder settles fast, chilli powder settles slowly when put in water.
Turmeric Powder	Metanil Yellow	Add a few drops of HCl to the extract of turmeric from water. Instant appearance of violet colour which persists when diluted with water indicates the presence of metanil yellow.
Dal arhar, moong, washed channa	Metanil Yellow	Extract the colour with luke warm water from the sample of pulses, add drops of HCl. A pink colour indicates presence of metanil yellow.
Green vegetables like chilli	Malachite green	Take a small part of the sample and place it over a moistened white blotting paper, the impression of the colour on paper indicates the presence of malachite green
Pure Ghee or Butter	Vanaspathi	Take one teaspoonful of melted ghee or butter with equal quantity of Conc. Hydrochloric acid in a test tube and add to it a pinch of cane sugar. Shake well for one minute and let it stand for five minutes. Appearance of crimson colour in lower layer shows the presence of vanaspathi.
Black Pepper	Papaya Seeds	Float the sample in alcohol. The mature black pepper berries sink while papaya seeds and light black pepper float.
Hing	Soap Stone or earthy matter	Shake a little portion of sample with water and allow to settle. Soap stone or earthy matter will settle down at the bottom.
Saffron	Coloured dried tendrils of maize cob	Pure saffron will not break easily unlike artificial. Pure saffron when allowed to dissolve in water will continue to release colour so long as it lasts.
Common Salt	White powdered stone	Stir a spoonful of sample salt in water. Chalk will make the solution white and other insoluble impurities will settle down.



For HCL you can use acid at your home, used for cleaning toilets. For acetone, you may use nail polish remover. No one can cheat you now.

Well! People like us may worry about adulteration. But the poor people don't get enough food to even worry about the quality they are getting. It might be due to droughts and famines or improper food distribution. India has witnessed many famines before and after independence, the worst being the Bengal famine. Even in the latter half of the 19th century, there were approximately 25 major famines across India which killed between 30 and 40 million people. Agriculture development and food production are central to national food security. In addition, there are several other factors that determine the food security at household level. These include food prices, food availability, employment and purchasing power, government subsidies and the food rationing system

On the contrary, even our food distribution methods are so corrupted and obsolete that the poor in the urban and rural area don't receive their fair shares. At the national level, food security essentially refers to the capacity of a country to provide sufficient food for its population, and it will depend on such factors as food production, imports, food aid and within-country food distribution (in India's case, this is state-level food security).

The two main factors determining household food security - poverty and food prices - are investigated here. The cost of achieving and maintaining food security is important and can be revealed through an analysis of the proportions of either income or expenditure that is allocated to food.

Another method to find out about food distribution is by finding out per capita availability. The per capita availability of food is a function of population and food production with adjustments made for exports, imports, wastage, livestock feed, seeds and stocks at the beginning of the year.

With soaring food prices and insufficient supply a poor man is unable to buy rice and wheat to feed his family. The government runs ration shops by supplying food items to the dealers at subsidized rates. These dealers often use unfair means and provide adulterated food. A farmer sells the cereals and grains produced to the government. But they aren't given the right price for their produce. Many don't get good seeds and manure. Water supply is inadequate on the fields. Very few have been provided with pumps.

Visit the nearest ration shop. Form a club and find out about food insufficiency in your area. Collect money or grains for poor people. Complain in case you come across adulterated food. Form a media club and make documentaries on such issues. Find out about the GREEN REVOLUTION and the drought conditions in Rajasthan and Bihar.

How can we prevent ourselves against adulteration?

Buy only AGMARK and ISI-marked products. If you have purchased any item and doubt its quality, you can approach the company concerned. Always remember to preserve your bills so that the company can take necessary steps regarding the complaint. If any person manufactures for sale, stores, sells, imports or distributes any article of food, which is adulterated or misbranded, he is liable under the PFA Act to be punished with imprisonment and fined. If you find that any food is adulterated, then do not keep silent. Complain to Prevention of Food Adulteration Department in your city / town / district.

Resource allocation must be prioritized to reach the neediest segments of society. In a country, which houses most of the world's poor, it should begin at the bottom of the economic spectrum. Poverty in India, like elsewhere, does not discriminate between religion, caste or region. It has afflicted whole regions and generations of India.

These were the general problems, which come with poverty. But education is a problem due to which poverty occurs.



Every day you send your child to school. you are saving up for his university. One day he will hold his degree and it will be the best day of your life...have you ever thought that your servant, driver, the rag picker might be having the same dream for their children ? Today, many children have to work to provide for their families. They aren't sent to school and don't have access to any sort of education.



At a roadside eatery a child prepares pakoras in the evening. Does he not deserve to go to school too ?

KNOW WHAT HAS BEEN DONE FOR THE UPLIFTMENT OF THE RURAL PEOPLE...IN TERMS OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT.

Many programmes have been undertaken to help the poor in urban and rural areas. The poor have been provided work in government offices and organizations. Many work as heavy load workers at government construction sites. Many have been employed in rural areas for construction of schools, hospitals, etc. The ones who have received education can work in Bal Bhavans and government offices. A separate unemployment exchange has been set up to help the rural unemployed.

Lets look at the initiatives taken by the government.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) is the most ambitious Rural Development Programme to be launched in the country till date. The NREGP is designed to provide succour to the most vulnerable sections by providing employment. It has brought into focus the roles of the State and the market in generating employment in the rural areas, which is captured in the assertion that the poor have a right to 1% of GDP in an economy that is growing at 6-7% per annum.

How has NREGP changed the lives of millions?

- What the NREGP scheme seeks to do is provide at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The kind of jobs to be undertaken are water conservation, drought proofing, irrigation canal construction, renovation of traditional water bodies, land development, flood protection and

improving road access. All this will cost the state Rs. 40,000 crore, which is to be raised through increase in budgetary support, savings from existing employment schemes and additional allocation in gross budgetary support to states.

- Find out about the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). Discuss their decision on stressing upon the need for a new concept to address both equity and sustainability and termed 'sustainable livelihood security'.

Learn about Robert Chambers, Gordon Conway and others working with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) who developed the Sustainable Livelihoods (SL). The SL approach builds on the Integrated Rural Development (IRD) model, participatory development and basic needs approaches, food security studies, and sector-wide approaches (DFID, 2003) and incorporates other types of analyses related to households, gender, governance and farming systems to arrive at a more holistic understanding of poverty.

NREGA is an ACT- not a program; we can take the Government to the court if it does not give us 100 days of work per family. It is applicable till date only in 200 districts.

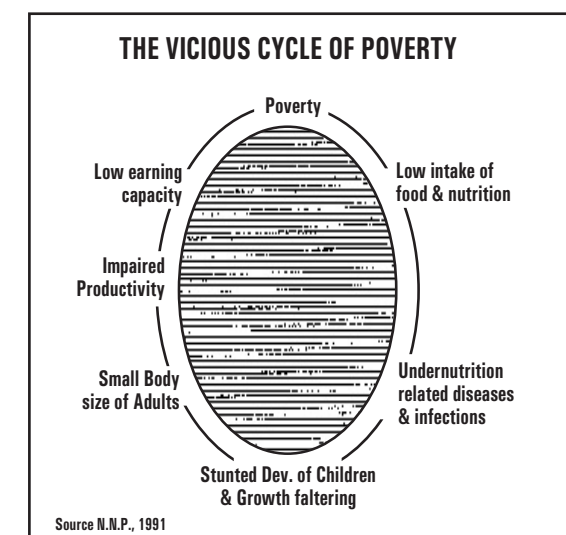
In many tribal areas, various arts that belong to the area have been a source of livelihood for the people. Its been promoted to sustain the exquisite culture and provide livelihood to the people.

Many small industries have also been set up for this purpose.



Find out the real cause of poverty

- Discuss it's characteristics as a vicious circle
- Find out about NGOs, which work for the poor.
- Start a newsletter; it can be a local paper of your area. Print stories about miseries and pain faced by the poor.
- Start awareness camps to tell them about their rights.
- Help in women's empowerment. Fight for equal rights.



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PRINCIPLE 10

ENSURE THAT ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS PROMOTE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN AN EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE MANNER.

- Promote the equitable distribution of wealth within nations and among nations.
- Enhance the intellectual, financial, technical, and social resources of developing nations, and relieve them of onerous international debt.
- Ensure that all trade supports sustainable resource use, environmental protection, and progressive labour standards.
- Require multinational corporations and international financial organizations to act transparently in the public good, and hold them accountable for the consequences of their activities.

It aims

- To maintain resources and ensure their fair distribution.
- Help the developing countries to progress.
- Environment conservation in both developed and developing countries.
- To protect the rights of workers and labourers.

Any developing country needs these four concepts for development. You must have heard these complex words in your classrooms or would have come across these in your civics textbooks.

- Economic Growth
- Social Growth
- Sustainable Development
- Maintaining a minimum standard of living

Developed countries have the privilege of becoming sustainable developing economies with technology and financial mechanisms in place whereas it is a rather difficult task for the developing countries.

What do we understand by the term infrastructure?

It stands for the foundation on which the country runs its governance, civil services etc. The scope of the term can be broadened to all activities undertaken for economic growth. Thus infrastructure is needed to support any thing for a long time.

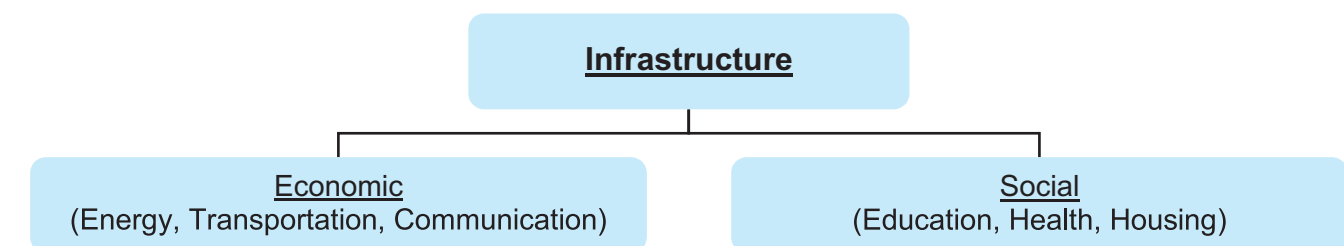
Railway lines	Roads
Government offices	Universities
Dams	Canal system
Pipelines	Power plants
Space stations	Flyovers
Schools	Colleges
Hotels	Hospitals
	Bridges

As we all know, developmental activities run a country and are vital for its growth. In India, after independence many such activities have been undertaken.

Look around

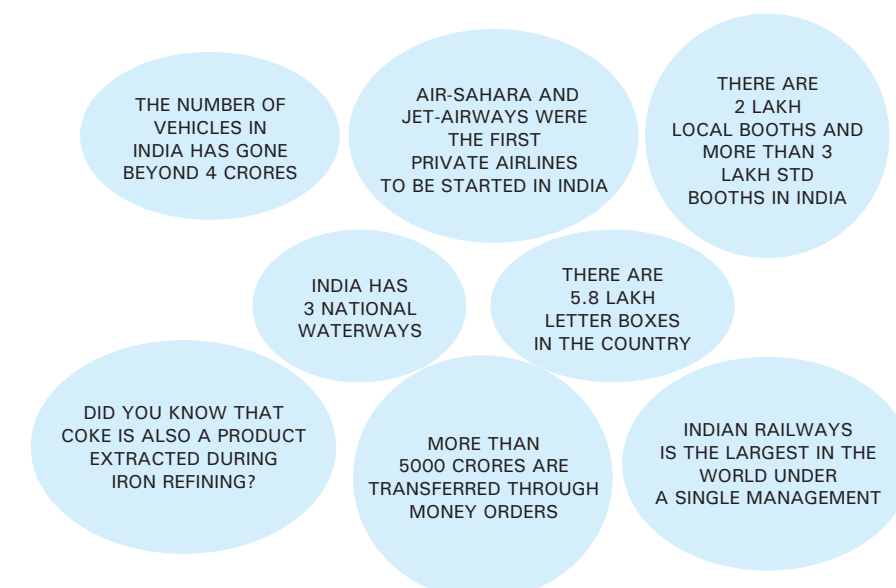
Know all that has been done in your state in the last five years for its development.

- How has your city changed? How has modernization affected its development?
- Make a report on the condition of roads in your area.
- Find out the history behind the Indian railways
- Form a club and have talk sessions discussing, how your area, state and country have evolved?



Do this...

- While traveling by train you can find out the names of the companies, which supplied steel girdles for the bridges.
- Why are trains better than road ways in all views?
- Find out the length of the Indian roads.
- What are water ways?
- What is maritime transport?
- How many major ports are there in India?
- Can you count all the air services on your fingers?



This was about economic development. Talking about its social counterpart...



DEBATE

- Are public schools better than government schools?
- Why do states like Bihar, UP and Rajasthan have low literacy rates?
- Why Kerala having the highest literacy rates, is still a center for crime?

Find out-how many people in India pursue higher education?

Collect information on improvement in the health sector.

Form a club and teach the underprivileged.

THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLING IN SCHOOLS HAS GONE UP TO 4.2 CRORES

THERE ARE KACCHA, SEMI-PUCCA AND PUCCA HOUSING UNITS

THERE ARE COMMUNITY PRIMARY AND HEALTH SUB CENTERS

GOVERNMENT SPENDS 4% GDP ON INSTITUTIONAL EXPENDITURE

INDIA HAS 6.4 LAKH PRIMARY AND 2 LAKH UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

THERE ARE 1.14 CRORES KUTCHA HOUSES IN INDIA. AND 11 LAKH OF THESE ARE THERE IN URBAN AREAS.

A TRAGIC STORY THAT SAYS ALL ABOUT THE POLITICS AND CORRUPTION POLLUTING INDIAN SOCIETY

Name : Rashida Bee (name changed)
Age : 53
Age at the Time of Disaster : 30
Residence : Jaiprakash Nagar

I was about 30 years old in December 1984 and had rarely crossed the threshold of my family home. But ever since the tragedy, I have been running from pillar to post to seek justice, not for myself, but for others like me.

When the gas leaked, we were 15 people sleeping in a room seven feet by eight feet. Ours was a joint family. Those days we lived in the Budhwara locality of Bhopal, about 3 km from the Union Carbide factory. Soon we heard screams. We opened the door and saw people running. They were coughing so badly that they were not even able to talk. We too ran. After about a kilometer, I sat down. My eyes were inflamed. My lungs felt as if they were filled with red chillies. At about 4 am, the police told us to go back home. But we decided to get out of the city and go to our village. On the way all I could see were dead bodies. On the highway trucks and minibuses were carrying people out of the city. The people just looked at the direction in which the vehicles were headed and jumped in. Many even reached as far as Jhansi (over 200 km away). No one was concerned with what the others were doing. It was only after the situation subsided that people started looking for their near and dear ones. Many lost their children.

Five children and two adults were missing from my family. We decided to look for them in hospitals, but with no luck. The doctors said we could look for them among the dead. There were bodies everywhere, stacked on top of each other. One policeman said, "You may not be able to find them. They may be dead. Why don't you take Rs. 7,000 or Rs. 10,000 per missing person?" By then the government had announced Rs10,000 for the next of kin of those missing. But we said that we were not prepared to accept that they were dead. The next day we found all of them alive in a hospital. But five of them have died since then of cancer. One of my nephews was six months old the night the gas leaked. By fourteen, he developed a neurological disorder. Likewise, the life of the other members of my family has been ruined. The government did nothing. My family members, including my husband, are proud that I am fighting for the rights of so many.

Discuss such stories about the crisis during World War II, India Pakistan partition, Emergency.

It's clear that corruption has also become a major share holder in almost all the trades. Exploitation is more evident in sectors like construction, fishing, cloth mills, sugar mills, tea, coffee, factories, and agricultural fields where heavy load labour is needed. These labourers are poor and illiterate and lack awareness of their rights and how they can protect themselves against various forms of exploitation. Usually children and women fall as easy victims as both are vulnerable sections of society and are often in desperate need of a job to sustain their families.



Discuss....

- Find out the reasons behind the increasing demand of women in fishery industry?
- Why the textile industry prefers women over men?
- What is feminist-agriculture? Why has it taken a rise in the rural parts?

With trade, economy, growth, even our ecology is our responsibility. Its our prime duty to conserve and preserve our ecology.

Why does the environment need protection?

With growing industrialization, pollution has increased to a very high level. It has further caused an increase in the green house gases like carbon dioxide, methane etc. leading to global warming.

The increased deforestation for dwelling and setting up of industries has decreased the forest cover, which has caused extinction of many endangered species.

With increasing number of vehicles, air pollution is ever increasing and causing many deadly diseases.

Find out

- Kyoto protocol and how has it been helpful in recovery of the environment?
- How an increase in the sea levels pose a threat to human existence?
- Make a chart showing endangered species and their characteristic features.
- Visit a near by small factory and find out about the working conditions of the workers.
- Talk to the workers and educate them about their rights.
- Talk about the government certified salaries and usage of PIL in case of injustice.
- Start camps to plant trees in your area.
- Use more of public transport.
- Talk about use of renewable resources.



The immediate environmental issues-

- Air, water and soil pollution
- Degradation of resources
- Deforestation
- Land degradation
- Wastewater and garbage management
- Disposal of radioactive products

With growing concern for the environment, some 1,700 of the world's leading scientists, including the majority of Nobel laureates in the sciences, issued this appeal on November 18, 1992. The Warning was written and spearheaded by UCS Chair Henry Kendall.

We require the help of the world community of scientists - natural, social, economic and political;

We require the help of the world's business and industrial leaders;

We require the help of the worlds religious leaders; and

We require the help of the world's people.

We call on all to join us in this task.

1. We must bring environmentally damaging activities under control to restore and protect the integrity of the Earth's systems we depend on. We must, for example, move away from fossil fuels to more benign, inexhaustible energy sources to cut greenhouse gas emissions and the pollution of our air and water. Priority must be given to the development of energy sources matched to third world needs - small scale and relatively easy to implement. We must halt deforestation, injury to and loss of agricultural land, and the loss of terrestrial and marine plant and animal species.
2. We must manage resources crucial to human welfare more effectively. We must give high priority to efficient use of energy, water, and other materials, including expansion of conservation and recycling.

3. We must stabilize population. This will be possible only if all nations recognize that it requires improvement in social and economic conditions, and the adoption of effective, voluntary family planning.
4. We must reduce and eventually eliminate poverty.
5. We must ensure sexual equality, and guarantee women control over their own reproductive decisions.

The developed nations are the largest polluters in the world today. They must greatly reduce their over-consumption, if we have to reduce pressures on resources and the global environment. The developed nations have the obligation to provide aid and support to developing nations, because only the developed nations have the financial resources and the technical skills for these tasks.

No nation can escape from injury when global biological systems will be damaged. No nation can escape from conflicts over increasingly scarce resources. In addition, environmental and economic instabilities will cause mass migrations with incalculable consequences for developed and undeveloped nations alike. Developing nations must realize that environmental damage is one of the gravest threats they face, and that attempts to blunt it will be overwhelmed if their populations go unchecked. The greatest peril is to become trapped in spirals of environmental decline, poverty, and unrest, leading to social, economic and environmental collapse.

The above mentioned should be our conduct to preserve our environment.

For development, as we have mentioned earlier foreign help is very important. It can be in terms of technology or money. Our government is really opening up to foreign investments in industries such as insurance, telecommunications and banking. But regulations governing these industries are not taking into consideration the needs of the poor and the informal sector. For instance, anyone who would like to set up an insurance company would have to set aside a certain percentage for rural poor. But, there is no mechanism to regulate and monitor that and, as a result, the poor are not benefiting. Unless and until major investment is made in upgrading skills of workers in the informal sector, foreign corporate investment will not benefit the very poor in India.

With growing number of foreign investors coming to India, the Indian market has hugely expanded. They sell branded goods at prices that the small scale industries cannot compete with. Although the job opportunities have increased, in many sectors it has led to brain drain.



- Find out about various foreign products being sold in India.
- Find ways to protect the smaller industries.



PRINCIPLE 11

AFFIRM GENDER EQUALITY AND EQUITY AS PREREQUISITES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENSURE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE, AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY.



- Secure the human rights of women and girls and end all violence against them.
- Promote the active participation of women in all aspects of civil, social, political, economic, and cultural life as full and equal partners, decision makers, leaders, and beneficiaries.
- Strengthen families and ensure the safety and loving nurture of all family members.

It aims-

- To correct the present skewed sex ratio
- Encourage camps and awareness programs on women empowerment.
- Control female foeticide
- Inculcate family values in the young generation.

You can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of it's women.

- Jawaharlal Nehru

India, with a billion strong population, is the world's second most populous country. Of that number, 120 million are women who live in poverty. Over 70 percent of India's population currently derive their livelihood from land resources, which includes 84 percent of the economically active women. India is one of the few countries where males significantly outnumber females, and this imbalance has increased over time. India's maternal mortality rates in rural areas are among the world's highest. From a global perspective, Indian accounts for 19 percent of all live births and 27 percent of all maternal deaths.

There seems to be a consensus that higher female mortality between ages one and five and high maternal mortality rates result in a deficit of females in the population. Chatterjee (1990) estimates that deaths of young girls in India exceed those of young boys by over 300,000 each year, and every



sixth infant death is specifically due to gender discrimination. Of the 15 million baby girls born in India each year, nearly 25 percent will not live to see their fifteenth birthday.

The Indian constitution grants women equal rights with men, but strong patriarchal traditions persist, with women's lives shaped by customs that are centuries old. In most Indian families, a daughter is viewed as a liability, and she is conditioned to believe that she is inferior and subordinate to men. Sons are idolized and celebrated. "May you be the mother of a hundred sons" is a common Hindu wedding blessing.

The origin of the Indian idea of appropriate female behaviour can be traced to the rules laid down by Manu in 200 B.C.: "by a young girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house... In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent."

A study of women in the Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP), based in 20 villages in four districts in Maharashtra state was introduced in this way:

The primary issue that all women in the SSP were struggling with was of everyday survival. Insufficient incomes and the lack of employment were reported to be their most pressing concerns. Survival is a constant preoccupation and at its most basic, survival means food (Chambers 1983). The most common problems were the lack of basic amenities such as food, water, fuel, fodder and health facilities. In addition, the deterioration of the natural environment and the fact that many of their traditional occupations were no longer viable were conditions that were making it increasingly hard for women to continue sustaining their families, as they had done in the past.

SSP is a loose, informal network of women's collectives, voluntary organizations, action groups and unions.

WOMEN ARE MALNOURISHED

The exceptionally high rates of malnutrition in South Asia are rooted deeply in the soil of inequality between men and women.

"...the poor care that is afforded to girls and women by their husbands and by elders is the first major reason for levels of child malnutrition that are markedly higher in South Asia than anywhere else in the world."

Gender disparities in nutrition are evident from infancy to adulthood. In fact, gender has been the most statistically significant determinant of malnutrition among young children and malnutrition is a frequent direct or underlying cause of death among girls below age of five. Adult women consume approximately 1,000 fewer calories per day than men according to one estimate from Punjab. Comparison of household dietary intake studies in different parts of the country shows that nutritional equity between males and females is lower in northern than in southern states. Nutritional deprivation has two major consequences for women: they never reach their full growth potential and anaemia. Both are risk factors in pregnancy, with anaemia ranging from 40-50% in urban areas to 50-70% in rural areas. This condition complicates childbearing and result in maternal and infant deaths, and low birth weight infants.

One study found anaemia in over 95% of girls aged 6-14 in Calcutta, around 67% in the Hyderabad area, 73% in the New Delhi area, and about 18% in the Madras area. This study states, the prevalence of anaemia among women aged 15-24 and 25-44 years follows similar patterns and levels. Besides posing risks during pregnancy, anaemia increases women's susceptibility to diseases such as tuberculosis and reduces the energy women have available for daily activities such as household chores, child care, and agricultural labour. Any severely anaemic individual is taxed by most physical activities, including walking at an ordinary pace.



WOMEN ARE IN POOR HEALTH

Surviving through a normal life is a resource-poor woman's greatest challenge.

If women are particularly anxious to have a male child, they may deliberately try to become pregnant again as soon as possible after a female is born. Conversely, women may consciously seek to avoid another pregnancy after the birth of a male child in order to give maximum attention to the son. A primary way that parents discriminate against their daughters is through neglect during illness. When sick, little girls are not taken to the doctor as frequently as are their brothers. A study in Punjab shows that medical expenditure for boys is 2.3 times higher than for girls.

As adults, women get less health care than men. They tend to be less likely to admit that they are sick and they will wait until their sickness has worsened before they seek help or help is sought for them. Studies on attendance at rural primary health centers reveal that more males than females are treated in almost all parts of the country, with differences greater in northern hospitals than southern ones, pointing to regional differences in the value placed on women. Women's conditioning to tolerate suffering and their reluctance to be examined by male personnel are additional constraints in their getting adequate health care.

MATERNAL MORTALITY

India's maternal mortality rates in rural areas are among the highest in the world.

Even a woman who has had difficulties with previous pregnancies is usually treated with home remedies. The decision whether a pregnant woman needs help rests with the mother-in-law and husband, financial considerations and fear that the treatment may be more harmful than the malady.

It is estimated that pregnancy-related deaths account for one-quarter of all fatalities among women aged 15 to 29, with well over two-thirds of them considered preventable. For every maternal death in India, an estimated 20 more women suffer from impaired health. One village-level study of rural women in Maharashtra determined on the basis of physical examinations that some 92 percent suffered from one or more gynaecological disorders.

Job impact on Maternal Health - Working conditions result in premature births and stillbirths.

The tasks performed by women are usually those that require them to be in one position for long periods of time, which can adversely affect their reproductive health. A study in a rice-growing belt of coastal Maharashtra found that 40 percent of all infant deaths occurred in the months of July to October. The study also found that a majority of births were either premature or stillbirths. The study attributed this to the squatting position that had to be assumed during July and August, the rice transplanting months.

Impact of Pollution on Women - Women's health is further harmed by air and water pollution and lack of sanitation.

The impact of pollution and industrial wastes on health is considerable. In *Environment, Development and the Gender Gap*, Sandhya Venkateswaran asserts that the high incidence of malnutrition present amongst women and their low metabolism and other health problems affect their capacity to deal with chemical stress. The smoke from household biomass (made up of wood, dung and crop residues) stoves within a three-hour period is equivalent to smoking 20 packs of cigarettes. For women who spend at least three hours per day cooking, often in a poorly ventilated area, the impact includes eye problems, respiratory problems, chronic bronchitis and lung cancer. One study quoted by WHO in 1991 found that pregnant women cooking over open biomass stoves had almost a 50% higher chance of stillbirth.



Anaemia makes a person more susceptible to carbon monoxide toxicity, which is one of the main pollutants in the biomass smoke. Given the number of Indian women who are anaemic, 25-30% in the reproductive age group and almost 50% in the third trimester, this adds to their vulnerability to carbon monoxide toxicity.

Additionally, with an increasing population, diseases caused by waste disposal, such as hookworm, are rampant. People who work barefooted are particularly susceptible, and it has been found that hookworm is directly responsible for the high percentage of anaemia among rural women.

LOW LITERACY RATE AMONGST WOMEN

Women and girls receive far less education than men, due both to social norms and fears of violence.

India has the largest population of non-schoolgoing working girls.

India's constitution guarantees free primary school education for both boys and girls up to age 14. This goal has been repeatedly reconfirmed, but primary education in India is not universal. Overall, the literacy rate for women is 39% versus 64% for men. The rate for women in the four large northern states Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh is lower than the national average: it was 25% in 1991. Attendance rates from the 1981 census suggest that no more than a third of all girls (and a lower proportion of rural girls) aged 5-14 are attending school.

Although substantial progress has been achieved since India won its independence in 1947, when less than 8% of females were literate, the gains have not been rapid enough to keep pace with population growth: there were 16 million more illiterate females in 1991 than in 1981.

WOMEN ARE OVERWORKED

Women often work longer hours and their work is more arduous than men's.

Women's contribution to agriculture, whether it be subsistence farming or commercial agriculture when measured in terms of the number of tasks performed and time spent, is greater than men. "The extent of women's contribution is aptly highlighted by a micro study conducted in the Indian Himalayas which found that on a one-hectare farm, a pair of bullocks works 1,064 hours, a man 1,212 hours and a woman 3,485 hours in a year."

In Andhra Pradesh, (Mies 1986) found that the work day of a woman agricultural labourer during the agricultural season lasts for 15 hours, from 4 am to 8 pm, with an hour's rest in between. Her male counterpart works for seven to eight hours, from 5 am to 10 am or 11 am and from 3 pm to 5 pm.

Another study on time and energy spent by men and women on agricultural work (Batliwala 1982) found that 53% of the total human hours per household are contributed by women as compared to 31% by men. The remaining contribution comes from children.

The invisibility of women's work - Women's work is rarely recognized.

Many maintain that women's economic dependence on men impacts their power within the family. With increased participation in income-earning activities, not only will there be more income for the family, but gender inequality should be reduced. This issue is particularly relevant in India because studies show a very low level of female participation in the labour force. This under-reporting is attributed to the frequently held view that women's work is not economically productive.



WOMEN ARE MISTREATED

Violence against women and girls is the most pervasive human rights violation in the world today.

Opening the door on the subject of violence against the world's females is like standing at the threshold of an immense dark chamber vibrating with collective anguish, but with the sounds of protest throttled back to a murmur. Where there should be outrage aimed at an intolerable status quo there is instead denial, and the largely passive acceptance of the way things are.

Violence against women is a worldwide phenomenon. Although not every woman has experienced it, and many expect not to, fear of violence is an important factor in the lives of most women. It determines what they do, when they do it, where they do it, and with whom. Fear of violence is a cause of women's lack of participation in activities beyond the home, as well as inside it. Within the home, women and girls may be subjected to physical and sexual abuse as punishment or as culturally justified assaults. These acts shape their attitude to life, and their expectations of themselves.

The insecurity outside the household is today the greatest obstacle in the path of women. Conscious that, compared to the atrocities outside the house, atrocities within the house are endurable, women not only continued to accept their inferiority in the house and society, but even called it sweet.

In recent years, there has been an alarming rise in atrocities against women in India. Every 26 minutes a woman is molested. Every 34 minutes a rape takes place. Every 42 minutes a sexual harassment incident occurs. Every 43 minutes a woman is kidnapped. And every 93 minutes a woman is burnt to death over dowry.

One quarter of the reported rapes involve girls under the age of 16 but the vast majority are never reported. Although the penalty is severe, convictions are rare.

Sex-selective Abortions

The most extreme expression of the preference for sons is female infanticide and sex-selective abortion.

A study of amniocentesis in a Bombay hospital found that 96 percent of female fetuses were aborted compared with only a small percentage of male fetuses.

Government officials even suspect that the disproportionate abortion of female fetuses may be a major underlying cause of the recent decline in the nation's sex ratio. In 1971 there were 930 females for every 1,000 males. A decade later this figure had increased to 934, but by 1991, instead of continuing to rise, the ratio dropped to 927, lower than the 1971 figure. This sex ratio is one of the lowest in the world.

Sonalde Desai reports that there are posters in Bombay advertising sex-determination tests that read, "It is better to pay Rs. 500 now than Rs. 50,000 (in dowry) later."

Government has passed legislation to curb the misuse of amniocentesis for sex selection and abortion of female fetuses. Women activists have been critical of this act because of its provision that calls for punishing the women who seek the procedure. These women may be under pressure to bear a male child.

WOMEN REMAIN POWERLESS

Legal protection of women's rights has little effect in the face of prevailing patriarchal traditions.



Marriage:

Women are still subordinate in most marriages.

Exposure to and interactions with the outside world are instrumental in determining the possibilities available to women in their daily lives. The situation of women is affected by the degree of their autonomy or capacity to make decisions both inside and outside their own household.

The position of women in northern India is notably poor. Traditional Hindu society in northern rural areas is hierarchical and dominated by men, as evidenced by marriage customs. North Indian Hindus are expected to marry within prescribed boundaries: the bride and groom must not be related, they have no say in the matter, and the man must live outside the woman's natal village.

Wife givers are socially and ritually inferior to *wife takers*, thus necessitating the provision of a dowry. After marriage, the bride moves in with her husband's family. Such a bride is *a stranger in a strange place*. They are controlled by the older females in the household, and their behavior reflects on the honor of their husbands. Because emotional ties between spouses are considered a potential threat to the solidarity of the patrilineal group, the northern system tends to segregate the sexes and limit communication between spouses a circumstance that has direct consequences for family planning and similar *modern* behaviours that affect health. A young Indian bride is brought up to believe that her own wishes and interests are subordinate to those of her husband and his family. The primary duty of a newly married young woman, and virtually her only means of improving her position in the hierarchy of her husband's household, is to bear sons.

Sonalde Desai points out that the perception that sons are the major source of economic security in old age is so strong in the north that many parents, while visiting their married daughters, do not accept food or other hospitality from them. However, given women's low independent incomes and lack of control over their earnings, few can provide economic support to their parents even if parents were willing to accept it.

In the south, in contrast, a daughter traditionally marries her mother's brother or her mother's brother's son (her first cousin). Such an arrangement has a dramatic impact on women. In southern India, men are likely to marry women to whom they are related, so that the strict distinction found in the north between patrilineal and marital relatives is absent. Women are likely to be married into family households near their natal homes, and are more likely to retain close relationships with their natal kin.

Child Marriages

Child marriages keep women subjugated.

A 1976 amendment to the Child Marriage Restraint Act raised the minimum legal age for marriage from 15 to 18 for women and from 18 to 21 for men. However, in many rural communities, illegal child

According to Union Health Ministry statistics, 68% of girls in Rajasthan are married off before the age of 18. And research into the incidence of child marriage in Rajasthan, which has been banned under the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, records that there are few signs of the custom disappearing.

On the contrary, despite the law, and the government's stated aim to implement it, on Akhatee, the festival considered auspicious for solemnising such marriages, hundreds of weddings are held across Rajasthan with no one stopping them.

Small boys and girls, some of them asleep and all of them unaware of what is happening, are betrothed to each other. The reality sinks in when they attain puberty by which time they are told they have no choice. In fact they do have a choice and Sativa is one brave woman who has decided to exercise it. Instead of coming to her aid, the village panchayat head, Mangilal Chaudhary says, "She's an immature girl. Our culture accepts such marriages."

marriages are still common. In some rural areas, nearly half the girls between 10 and 14 are married. Because there is pressure on women to prove their fertility by conceiving as soon as possible after marriage, adolescent marriage is synonymous with adolescent childbearing: roughly 10-15% of all births take place to women in their teens.

Dowries:

Women are kept subordinate, and are even burnt

In India, 6,000 dowry murders are committed each year. This reality exists even though the Dowry Prohibition Act has been in existence for 33 years, and there are virtually no arrests under the Act. Since those giving as well as those accepting dowry are punishable under the existing law, no one is willing to complain. It is only after a "dowry death" that the complaints become public. It is estimated that the average dowry today is equivalent to five times the family's annual income and that the high cost of weddings and dowries is a major cause of indebtedness among India's poor.



A December 1997 article in **India Today**, entitled, *Victims of Sudden Affluence* states, "A woman on fire has made dowry deaths the most vicious of social crimes; it is an evil endemic to the subcontinent but despite every attempt at justice the numbers have continued to climb. With get-rich-quick becoming the new mantra, dowry became the perfect instrument for upward material mobility." A study done by a policy think-tank, the Institute of Development and Communication, states, "the quantum of dowry exchange may still be greater among the upper classes, but 80% of dowry deaths and 80% of dowry harassment occurs in the middle and lower strata."

Inheritance:

Women's right to inheritance are limited and frequently violated


One of the most difficult subjects on which to talk to a farmer's widow is the issue of land title. It is not as if women are not willing to talk on this all-important subject. But in-laws inevitably take over the conversation at that point, forcing the widow into a passive silence.

Land rights and women have never made an easy combination. The traditional system of land rights, which is still followed in the rural areas despite all the legal provisions granting women equal rights, gives women only sustenance, or at best custodial rights in favour of minor sons, not ownership rights.

In the mid-1950s the Hindu personal laws, which apply to all Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains, were overhauled, banning polygamy and giving women rights to inheritance, adoption and divorce. The Muslim personal laws differ considerably from that of the Hindus, and permit polygamy. Despite various laws protecting women's rights, traditional patriarchal attitudes still prevail and are strengthened and perpetuated in the home.


Under Hindu law, sons have an independent share in the ancestral property. However, daughters' shares are based on the share received by their father. Hence, a father can effectively disinherit a daughter by renouncing his share of the ancestral property, but the son will continue to have a share in his own right. Additionally, married daughters, even those

After Manorama Ahir's (village Naygaon, district Buldhana) husband died, she wasn't allowed to own her husband's land. She reported that her brother-in-law had sown cotton and tur on the entire land, but at harvest time she got just 4 kg of tur.



DEBATE

- Do women enjoy equal rights as men in our country?
- How has the status of women changed from the 17th century?
- Discourage female foeticide. Form active clubs & take help of the hospitals to keep a regular check on the abortion cases.
- Talk to the rural & uneducated about the benefits of having a girl.
- Does high education & literacy rate in the society, decrease violence against women? Then why in a state like Kerala domestic violence has increased 4-folds in past 7 years?
- Why did Gandhiji trust women more than men in his fight for independence?
- Which woman do you admire the most for her work? Why do you admire her?



Even the weak laws protecting women have not been adequately enforced. As a result, in practice, women continue to have little access to land and property, a major source of income and long-term economic security. Under the pretext of preventing fragmentation of agricultural holdings, several states have successfully excluded widows and daughters from inheriting agricultural land.

"The highest national priority must be the unleashing of woman power in governance. That is the single most important source of societal energy that we have kept corked for more than half a century."

– Mani Shankar Aiyar

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Social Indicator	India	World	Developing World	Kerala	Sri Lanka
Infant Mortality Rate, per 1000 live births	73	60	66	16	17
Maternal Mortality Rate, per 100,000 live births	570	430	470		140
Female Literacy, %	58	77.6	70.4	86.93	90.2
Female School Enrolment	47	62	57	63	67
Earned Income by females, %	26	58	53	49.8	35.5
Underweight Children, %	53	30	30		38
Total Fertility Rate	3.2	2.9	3.2	1.9	2.1
Women in Government, %	6	7	5		9
Contraception usage, %	44	56	54	56	66
Low birth-weight babies, %	33	17	7		25

Kerala and Sri Lanka are added for comparison as they are recognized as having made exceptional efforts in the field of female education.

As former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has stated, "Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance."

This recognition is currently missing in India. Transforming the prevailing social discrimination against women must become *the* top priority, and must happen concurrently with increased direct action to rapidly improve the social and economic status of women. In this way, a synergy of progress can be achieved.

- As women receive greater education and training, they will earn more money.
- As women earn more money - as has been repeatedly shown - they spend it in the further education and health of their children, as opposed to men, who often spend it on drink, tobacco or other women.
- As women rise in economic status, they will gain greater social standing in the household and the village, and will have greater voice.
- As women gain influence and consciousness, they will make stronger claims to their entitlements - gaining further training, better access to credit and higher incomes - and command attention of police and courts when attacked.
- As women's economic power grows, it will be easier to overcome the tradition of "son preference" and thus put an end to the evil of dowry.
- As son preference declines and acceptance of violence declines, families will be more likely to educate their daughters, and age of marriage will rise.
- For every year beyond fourth grade that girls go to school, family size shrinks 20%, child deaths drop 10% and wages rise 20%.
- As women are better nourished and marry later, they will be healthier, more productive, and will give birth to healthier babies.

Only through action to remedy discrimination against women can the vision of India's independence an India where all people have the chance to live healthy and productive lives be realized.

Modern Indian Woman Educated, Empowered and Enlightened

This was about the plight of women. But one must not forget that India has had its share of women who have ruled the nation and have brought fame to the country. Mahatma Gandhi was the first one to encourage women to understand their potential. India's mythology and our history have numerous examples to talk about women power. Women like Indira Gandhi, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Vijay Lakshmi Pandit. They all have made the women rise and fight for her. They have become role models for many aspiring young men and women. After centuries of struggle, women in India are beginning to make some progress in the areas of gender equality and reproductive rights.



Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi

An Indian politician who served as Prime Minister of India for three consecutive terms from 1966 to 1977 and for a fourth term from 1980 to 1984. She is India's first and only female prime minister to date.

Born in the politically influential Nehru dynasty, she grew up in an intensely political atmosphere. Her grandfather Motilal Nehru and father Jawaharlal Nehru were prominent Indian nationalist leaders. While studying at Somerville College, University of Oxford, England, during the late 1930s, she became a member of the radical pro-independence London based India League. Returning to India in 1941, she became involved in the Indian Independence movement. In September 1942 she was arrested by the British authorities and detained without a charge. She was ultimately released on 13 May 1943 having spent over 243 days in jail.

In the 1950s, she served her father unofficially as a personal assistant during his tenure as India's first Prime Minister. After her father's death in 1964, she was appointed as a member of the Rajya Sabha by the President of India and became a member of Lal Bahadur Shastri's cabinet as Minister of Information and Broadcasting.



Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Biocon

She is the first female master brewer and the richest woman in India. Her father was a master brewer and he encouraged her to get into this profession. Shaw obtained her Honors degree in Zoology from Bangalore University. Then she went to Ballarat University to study brewery. Her first job was in Carlton & United Beverages in 1974, as a trainee brewer. She started her firm Biocon India in 1978 in her garage. When she applied for loan to the banks, she was turned down. At that time, biotechnology was not known in India and she was a female and her company did not have much assets. With her hard work and determination she overcome all these obstacles and turned Biocon into the biggest bio pharmaceutical firm in India.



Simone Tata, Managing Director (former), Lakme

With her visions, she changed a small unknown cosmetics company, one of the subsidiaries of Tata Oil Mills, into one of the leading cosmetic companies of India. Lakme changed the face of Indian fashion and cosmetics forever. For her success, Simone N. Tata is also known as Cosmetic Czarina of India. Simone joined Lakme in 1961 and became Chairperson in 1982. The company is now sold to Hindustan Lever. Simone is now heading Trent Limited, another subsidiary of the Tata Company.



Indra Krishnamurthy Nooyi

Born in Tamil Nadu, India she is the chairman and chief executive officer of Pepsi Co, the world's fourth-largest food and beverage company. On August 14, 2006, she was named the next to succeed Steve Reinemund as chief executive officer of the company. Reinemund, 58, retired on October 1, 2006. According to Forbes magazine's 2006 poll, Ms. Nooyi is the fourth most powerful woman in the world. She has been named the Most Powerful Woman in Business in 2006 by Fortune magazine.



Pratibha Devi Singh Patil

India's first female president, she was sworn in on 26th July, 2007, and vowed to eliminate the practice of aborting female fetuses and to empower women, who are often treated as second-class citizens.



Kiran Bedi

She is a trailblazer, admired and loved by many in India. She broke new ground by joining the élite Indian Police Service in 1972, the first woman in India to do so. Her humane and fearless approach has contributed greatly to innumerable innovative policing and prison reforms. She is today the most celebrated police officer, having been awarded the Ramon Magsaysay Award for government service, also called the Asian Nobel Prize, the Joseph Beuys Award by a German foundation and the Asia Region Award for Drug Prevention & Control by the International Organization of Good Templars (IOGT), a Norwegian organization. Besides her professional contributions, two voluntary organizations founded and supervised by her Navjyoti, set up in 1988

and India Vision Foundation in 1994, reach out to thousands of poor children daily for primary education, women for adult literacy, provide vocational training and counseling services in the slums, rural areas and inside the prison apart from treatment for drug addiction. She and her organizations today stand nationally and internationally recognized, with the latest award being given by the United Nations -the Serge Sotiroff Memorial Award for drug abuse prevention. Born into an extraordinary family with visionary parents, Kiran is the second of four daughters. She has been an Asian Tennis Champion, holds a law degree, has a Doctorate in the field of drug abuse and domestic violence, is an author and subject of various books and films.

Debate:

Pratibha Patil - first woman President of the largest democracy in the world. Is this going to have a positive impact or influence on the status of women in our country?

Women who have received education understand how the world around them works and have the courage to make their dreams come true.

Women have emerged to be equal partners. They have satisfying jobs and hold high positions in many international companies. They take part in decision making and take independent decisions. They work according to their will and are no more considered weak or helpless.

Women who lose their partners at an early age have the right to marry a man of their choice. They have the right to her husband's property. In case the man to whom she is married is cruel, impudent and not worth her, she can seek divorce, and get a regular allowance from him as per her wish and needs.

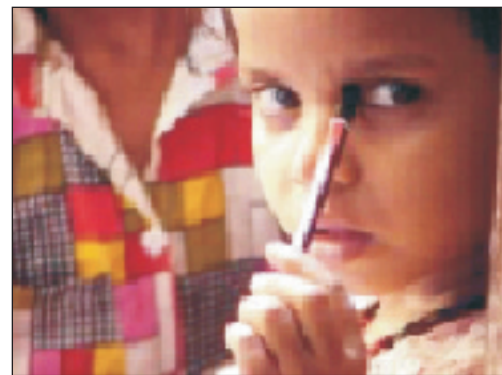
Sunita fights for equality

Sunita Kumari (13) studies in class 4th and does not like to miss her classes. She regularly attends classes in Karaiya Vidyala in Navgachhi village in Banipatti block of Madhubani district. Sunita wants to marry only when she attains the age of 18.

Born in a poor family, Sunita was not a favourite child of her parents who always preferred her brothers. She was not sent to school. But her younger brother was admitted in the school when he was young.

Sunita's father Ram Preet Sahni who runs a small shop wanted to marry her off at the earliest. Sunita's parents had fixed her marriage with a 53 year old man. On the day of her marriage, Sunita sought help from her aunt who is member of self help group under the PACS programme of Development Alternatives. Following the intervention from the SHG, Sunita was rescued.

Sunita wants to complete her studies now to prove that she is as good as or even better than her younger brother.



Today a woman is a symbol of power

Bebitai, a rural entrepreneur

Bebitai, a frail Gond woman and a widow in her early 40s, from a small Maharashtra village has made a fortune not only for herself but also has contributed immensely to community development.

Her husband was murdered over a dispute involving money in the late 1980s. She was left alone to fend for herself and her two little kids. She took to running her husband's grocery shop but soon ran into losses due to new competition.

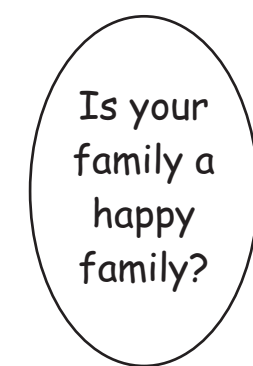


In 2001, under the Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) Programme, Bebitai was motivated to start a self-help group. She persuaded a dozen women and the *Sharada Bachat Gat* came into existence. Bebitai's group took a loan of Rs 15,000 from the district cooperative bank. She invested the money in buying 'khaprel', traditional roof tiles commonly used in rural parts of Maharashtra. Bebitai made them available at their doorstep, helping villagers save on transportation costs while making a decent profit for herself and her group.

Two years later, in 2003, her group took a big loan of Rs 1.25 lakh to buy land to build storage and start a Krishi Sewa Kendra (farmer service centre). The plan was to buy food grain, mahua and fertiliser and sell them in cash through the centre to farmers in surrounding areas. Since its inception, the Kendra has recorded a turnover of Rs 8 lakh from the sale of food grain, mahua flowers and fertilizer. They earn about 25 per cent profit on this.

She is trying to get a subsidy under the government scheme for digging a well on the land that her Group has purchased. It is likely to be approved in another 4-5 months.

A couple of years back she was elected the member of the gram panchayat, a position she continues to hold. She is a role model and a pillar of strength for the village women not only in her village but across the State of Maharashtra.



We had a good session on women rights. Now let's shift the topic to their responsibilities. When you see your mom, what's the one thing that strikes your mind... she's a homemaker more than anything else. She keeps the family together. That's the most important role a woman plays.

A woman has been viewed as the strongest thread that wraps the family in love and nurtures it like her child.

To lead a sound and peaceful life one needs support of the family. Its important not only in terms of monetary support but also emotional support. All the relationships are very precious and each member shares an important relation with the other member of the family.

Let's find out how we can strengthen our family bonds.

- The young members should be loved and elders should be respected
- Children should be taught the importance of staying together and sharing.
- There should be a healthy relation between the elders and the young in the family.
- Everyone should take part in decision-making process for the family.
- Parents should show respect and obey their parents to teach their children
- Spread awareness about family unity.
- Have discussions in class about the relationship students share with their family.
- Make a family tree with pictures of your family members and write down how they are special to you.

EXERCISES



- **Discuss** -
 1. How many amongst us idolize a woman.
 2. Are women given due respect in your family.
- Write down the different roles played by women in your family.
- Make Clubs and discuss the daily violence or abuse you witness and what you can do to improve the situation.
- Pledge not to ask or pay for dowry.
- This problem can ultimately be removed by literacy; so each one can educate someone like the kid of the maid etc.
- **Debate** - Though killing is a crime but abortions are legal.

PRINCIPLE 12

UPHOLD THE RIGHT OF ALL, WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION, TO A NATURAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT SUPPORTIVE OF HUMAN DIGNITY, BODILY HEALTH, AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND MINORITIES.

- a. *Eliminate discrimination in all its forms, such as that based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, language, and national, ethnic or social origin.*
- b. *Affirm the right of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources and to their related practice of sustainable livelihoods.*
- c. *Honour and support the young people of our communities, enabling them to fulfill their essential role in creating sustainable societies.*
- d. *Protect and restore outstanding places of cultural and spiritual significance.*

“This is no simple reform. It really is a revolution. Sex and race because they are easy and visible differences have been the primary ways of organizing human beings into superior and inferior groups and into the cheap labour in which this system still depends. We are talking about a society in which there will be no roles other than those chosen or those earned. We are really talking about humanism.”

- Gloria Steinem

The culture of India has evolved through history, all the while absorbing customs, traditions, and ideas from both invaders and immigrants. Many cultural practices, languages, customs, and monuments are examples of this mingling over the centuries.



In modern India there is cultural and religious diversity. Almost every state has carved out its own cultural niche. In spite of this unique cultural diversity, the whole country is bound as a civilization due to its common history, thereby preserving the national identity.

India is the birth place of religious systems such as Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, each of which has had a strong influence not only over India but also over the rest of the world. Following the Islamic invasions and the subsequent foreign domination the culture of India was heavily

influenced by Persian, Arabic and Turkish cultures. In turn, the various religions and the multi-hued traditions of India have influenced South East Asia and other parts of the world.

India is also a land of festivity. Multi-cultural and multi-ethnic are the words to describe it. From Deepawali to Id to Christmas, all festivals are celebrated with equal vigour.

Since the middle of the second millennium B.C. Indian civilization has played host to several streams of migrant groups and communities from different parts of the world. The advent of the Aryans, the Mongoloid groups, the Kushans, the Sakas, the Greeks, the Huns, the Arabs, the Persians, the Turks and the Mongols at different points of time testifies to the pervasiveness of the migration process during the successive periods of Indian history. The migrant groups and communities brought their respective traditions and behaviour patterns from their native lands. In course of time they lost contact with their places of origin and underwent an extensive process of indigenization. The process of adaptation and interaction among the various groups brought about, on the one hand, India's characteristic diversity and, on the other, a composite cultural tradition. This fact is borne out by historical sources and contemporary surveys as well as research in folklore.

The composite fabric of Indian civilization has been woven with strands and shades of varying textures and colours. It is no exaggeration to say that since ancient times India has represented a melting-pot of races and cultures. Indian civilization may be likened to an expansive river and the various cultural traditions within its confines to streams or tributaries which join the river at different points and thereby give it a distinctive character.

However amongst them we still find shades of native Indian culture intact over the centuries.

Talking about Indigenous people and Indian tribes...



The word tribe has always fascinated us. When you visit the village festivals or *mela* in your village, women and men loaded with jewellery and wearing colourful traditional clothes greet you. It is simply mesmerizing to watch tribals flaunting head gear made of feathers or other natural materials, singing and dancing in groups, probably to some strange tune.

Tribes have always been fascinating!! You would have heard many stories about them and would have imagined their lifestyle innumerable times. Due to their geographic placements they have remained secluded from the rest of the world for many years.

Many live in the dense forest of Himalayas and are difficult to locate. Many find solace in the interior deserts of Rajasthan. They might concentrate in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands or dwell in the serene hills of the north east.

Let us find out more about them...

Tribal dwellings in India

Tribes constitute 8% of the national population. They have different groups and are scattered all over India.

The largest tribes are found in central India, although the tribal population there accounts for only around 10% of the region's total population.

The tribal people inhabit the Himalayan belt, central India and eastern India. The largest population dwells in the central region.

They range in size from the Gonds (roughly 7.4 million) and the Santhals (approximately 4.2 million) to only eighteen Chaimals in the Andaman Islands.

There are some 573 communities recognized by the government as Scheduled Tribes and therefore eligible to receive special benefits and to compete for reserved seats in legislatures.

These tribes have varied customs and beliefs; practicing age-old traditions, they remain secluded. Tribal characteristics like the kind of clothes they wear, the ethnic jewellery they flaunt, the weapons they make out of stone and metal, their houses, everything related to them is unique: the places they dwell in, the community language, social organization, religious affiliation, economic patterns, and geographic location.



Discuss about the present tribal status.

Find out about the tribal groups belonging to your native place or village.

Mark the differences in customs and traditions.

Creative writing:

Imagine that for a day you became a tribal boy/girl. Pen down experiences and list your daily activities in the tribe. Write about their living conditions and the differences in lifestyles.

Start a media club and spread awareness through photographs, news letters and short movies.

Come up with campaigns to talk about such tribes. Spread awareness about them and their culture.

Try and learn their language. Conduct exhibitions to promote their art and craft.

They have lived like aliens in their own land. Seldom do you see a tribe living along with the local population.

Generally, they are wanderers, they seldom settle down at a place. Tribes are usually known to practice Swidden farming. In this they clear a small forest area by burning it and start their cultivation. After some time when the fertility of the area decreases the area is left to replenish its fertility. At times they produce cash crops like cotton and castor seeds and sell it to the merchants. Agriculture has never been practiced for the purpose of trading; until now it has been for the feeding the family and trade has been practiced with the help of exotic articles they collected from the forest or the

goods they carved out from the forest products. Among the tribals each community has an ancient art form belonging to them. The art which has been practiced by their ancestors and has been passed onto the followers. They generally make such goods and art pieces and sell them in the nearby market place.



A Halakki woman going to market to sell vegetables

Like we all need to work, the tribes too need to work to make a living.

Those living in the interiors generally depend on forest produce such as firewood, fruits and few vegetables that they cultivate near their homes. It is evident that merchants have been the connecting link between the tribes and the rest of society.

Merchants have long been a link to the outside world, but in the past they were generally petty traders, and the contact they had with tribal people was transient. These were non-tribal men who supplied them with necessary things like metal, utensils, and jewels. They gradually started supplying liquor and lured them into massive debts.

These cunning traders introduced the idea of cash crop farming to the tribes which left them without food to eat. If they needed loans, these innocent people were made to pay back with high interest.

This led to indebtedness of the tribal men and when they were allotted land by the government the merchants took control over their land and made them work on the land to pay off their debts.

By 1960s, non-tribals started dwelling in the tribal areas. They sold liquor on credit, luring tribal members into debt by mortgaging their land.

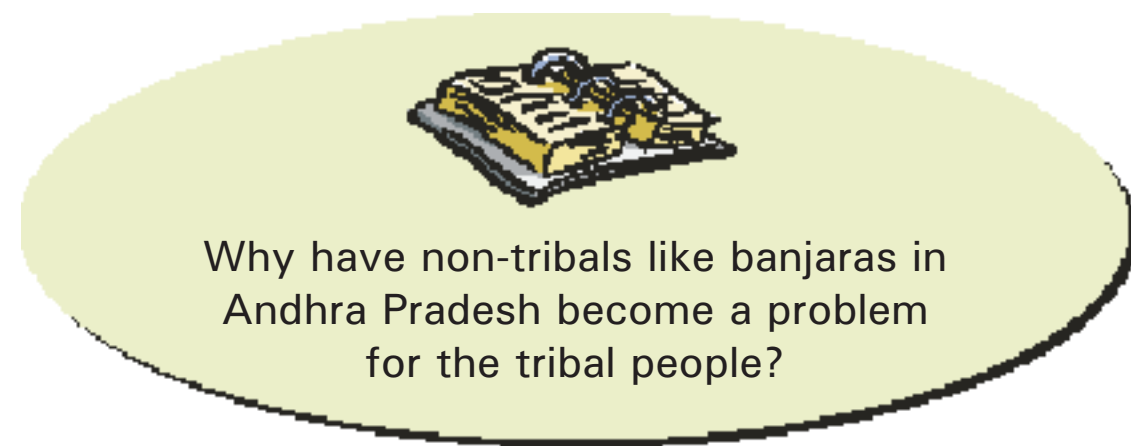
Gradually the merchants started giving loans for the harvest, with interest rates as high as 50 to 100% after harvest. This meant-

Repaying one bag of millet with two bags has set up a cycle of indebtedness from which many have been unable to break loose.

Cash crops offered a further disadvantage in that they decrease the supply of available foodstuffs and increase tribal dependence on economic forces beyond their control. This transformation has meant a decline in both the tribes' security and their standard of living.

In areas where gathering forest products is remunerative, merchants exchange their products for tribal labour. Indebtedness is so extensive that although such transactions are illegal, traders sometimes sell their debtors to other merchants, much like indentured servants.

Many tribals have suffered due to non tribal people living in their area but they were worst affected when non-tribals started dwelling in their community and were considered as tribals by the government. They enjoyed all the rights and facilities given to the tribals for their upliftment.



Why have non-tribals like banjaras in Andhra Pradesh become a problem for the tribal people?

With the changing scenario, and technology advancing with the speed of light, even the tribes have started thinking for their betterment. They have become more open to revolutions and changes. This is partially due to the increasing needs of the tribes and their easy accessibility.

Now the ideas like education, economic growth, rights, hospital facilities are becoming familiar with the communities.

Education among the tribes.

Tribes living in a mixed population, have not been left behind with advancing technology.

They speak the local language of the area and have settled down practicing to lead a sustainable life.

Many tribal kids go to school, but few complete their schooling. There are numerous cases of dropouts in junior school.

Only a few clear their junior school. Few who enter continue up to the tenth grade; of those who do, few manage to finish high school. Therefore, very few are eligible to attend institutions of higher education, where the high rate of attrition continues.

The effectiveness of educational policy likewise varies by region. In parts of the northeast, schooling has helped tribal people to secure political and economic benefits. The education system there has provided a corps of highly trained tribal members in the professions and high-ranking administrative posts.

The tribes are not only advancing in terms of economy and technology, but also in terms of society. Their traditions have been shared with the non-tribals and have proved to be fair and broad minded in many ways. The most bewildering is the status that women enjoy in tribes, which may find impossible to achieve in towns.

But all has not been well with these people. Tribes are facing a big threat.

In recent days there has been lot of politics and corruption associated with the tribals and their lifestyles. Corruption has been so tremendous that it has taken its toll in these areas too.

Happenings like *Salva Judum*.

The government says its a peace movement to free the tribals from the clutches of Naxalites.

This movement started as a small protest against naxalites in some village. But since then it has been

growing into a massive massacre with funding by the government and support from the opposition.

According to many, the police has been using the tribals to fight back the naxalites. Boards of *Salva Judum* have come up all along the roads. Hundreds of villages have been vacated since June, 2005 and many relief camps have been set up for the tribals brought into the *Salva Judum* fold. But that hasn't stopped the Naxalite attacks. In fact, they have been striking back with vengeance. Several tribals have been killed by Naxalites and thousands have deserted their villages and paddy fields fearing retaliation.

It leaves many homeless, jobless, leads to famine, starvation, misery and death. A complete scenario of brutality.



Let us find the differences in the lifestyles of a tribal woman and a non-tribal woman...



Women in tribal societies are not treated as second citizens, unlike their modern sisters. They share equal rights and status like men. This has been achieved by sheer hard work. They do their household work, help their men in fields, go to markets and visit forests to collect firewood and fruits.

They have the right to choose their groom and are never forced to marry. The groom has to pay brides price to her family, which is in terms of grain, fowl, wine, pigs, etc.

There are no child marriages and a woman can seek refuge if her husband is brutal, impudent.

Incase her husband dies at an early age; she is allowed to marry someone of her choice.

Both girl and boy child are given equal rights, unlike in our modern societies.

DEBATE

Who do you think are more modern and better civilized...the town dwellers or the tribal people? Do tribal women live a more dignified life than a modern woman with no rights at all?

The women might be sharing an equal status, which might put the tribes at a better position but it is not the same in all the spheres. There have been many such indigenous rituals associated with the tribes.

Just like the tribes there are many indigenous places also that have belonged to our ancestors and need to be conserved-

SACRED GROVES

Ancient temples they have for long being neglected but have remained an important part of the life of the locals inhabiting the surrounding places.

These are generally found in the interiors of forests, areas which are not easily accessible to people.

These sacred groves vary from place to place-

- Bamboo groves on the eastern coast.
- Clumps of trees in the northwestern deserts.
- Jungles in the tropical south and at times sacred valleys.
- Dense Himalayan forests in the north. These forests are tremendously diverse.
- Each grove is dedicated to a local deity.



How do these sacred groves play an important role in conservation?

These sacred groves due to their geographical placement, culture and traditions finely bound to them have for long been of much importance to the people living around them.

Local communities, through social traditions and taboos that incorporate spiritual and ecological values protect these sacred groves, which are dedicated to local deities or ancestral spirits.

Villagers perform ceremonies to please the gods and ensure well-being of the community.

Sacred groves preserve-

1. Native vegetation in a natural or near-natural state and thus are rich in biodiversity.
2. Habitat for many rare species of plants and animals.

Fortunately, thousands of sacred groves remain and many villages continue to preserve them through traditional values.



FIND OUT

- If the practice of sacred groves is restricted to Hinduism or other religions also believe in it?
- Locate the different topographical areas in India where sacred groves exist.
- Find out if the concept of sacred groves is present only in India or is practiced in other countries also?

Why are sacred groves disappearing?

Due to urbanization, corruption, increasing population and depleting traditions the sacred groves are disappearing.

Sacred groves in many parts of the country have been destroyed over the past century to make way for development projects such as railroads, highways and dams. In many places the government has ignored local communities' customary management rights and allowed the development of commercial forestry operations or encroachment by people migrating from outside the community who do not respect local traditions.

Construction of temples within the sacred groves are leading to their degradation and ultimate destruction.

How can we preserve these groves?

- Spread awareness about these groves.
- Start a club and teach the art forms associated with these groves.
- Through news papers and magazines talk about the various benefits of these groves.
- Start campaigns to ban deforestation and commercialization of the area surrounding the groves.
- Talk to the people related to these groves and conserve the tradition and culture associated to each grove.
- Visit a grove and share your experience with your friends.
- Locate a sacred grove in or around your city. Find out about its history and take up a project to protect it in it's natural form.

Just like the sacred groves, there are many historical monuments, which need to be preserved and protected. India has many such historical monuments which need to be protected.

These include temples, stepwells, kunds (or tanks), caves, mosques, tombs (Dargahs), inscriptions and ancient mounds (settlements).

The Archaeological Survey of India is an Indian government agency in the Department of Culture that is responsible for archaeological studies and the preservation of monuments.

ASI administers 3636 monuments it has declared to be of national importance under the provisions of the Antiquity and Art Treasure Act 1972. These include temples, stepwells, kunds (or tanks), caves, mosques, tombs (Dargahs), inscriptions and ancient mounds (settlements).



Let us find out how these monuments are degrading...

- Due to their aged structures which need repairs
- Many monuments are not conserved and are not maintained by the government.
- Many monuments have become picnic spots where people litter.
- Many people scribble on the walls of the monuments, which make them look shabby.

PRESERVE THE MONUMENTS.

- Visit any monument in your area and write about its condition in your local and school magazine.
- Start a club to protect the monuments in your area.
- Seek help from an NGO to preserve the monuments.
- Seek help from the government to ban scribbling on the walls of the monument.
- Have talk sessions in your class to preserve the monument and find out the history behind its construction.

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