

Lesson at a Glance

- We find **distinctions** between **boys** and **girls** in our societies. This begins from a very young age.
- Boys are often taught to be tough and serious while girls are taught to be soft and mild.
- Boys are given toys like cars and guns to play with while girls are seen playing with dolls. These toys become a way of telling children what they will have different futures when they become men and women.
- Most societies value men and women differently. The roles women play and the work they do are usually valued less than the roles men play and the work they do. This clears the fact that men and women do not have the same status.
- If a woman is a housewife, it is often said that she does not work. But the reality is that it is always the woman who bears the main responsibility for housework and care-giving tasks like looking after the family. As she does not earn money by doing these tasks, her work is not recognised.
- The term **houseworks** involves many different tasks which require heavy physical work.
- In both rural and urban areas women and girls carry heavy headloads of firewood. Housework also involves washing clothes, cleaning, sweeping and cooking foods etc. for the family. All these works are very tough, still women do them everyday. They do not complain or show any anguish on their face.
- The work of women is **time consuming** too. They do not have much time for leisure.
- Many women nowadays work both inside and outside the home. This is often referred to as the double burden. Women bear this double burden very skilfully and efficiently.
- **Equality** is an important principle of our constitution which says that being male or female should not become a reason for **discrimination**. But what we see in reality is that **inequality** still exists between both the sexes. The government is therefore, very much keen to take some positive measures to improve the situation.

- The government has set up **Anganwadis** or **Child-care Centres** in several villages in the country.
- The government has also started **creche** facilities to help women to take up employment outside home.

IN-TEXT QUESTIONS SOLVED

Q. 1. *In what ways do the experiences of Samoan children and teenagers differ from your own experiences of growing up? Is there anything in this experience that you wish was part of your growing up?* (NCERT Textbook, page 45)

Ans. Samoan children and teenagers did not go to school. They used to do household work. They looked after their younger siblings. Fishing was an important part of their activities. Unlike these children we cannot think a life without school. We go to school daily. Our teachers and parents teach us many different things like good manners, good health, etc. We don't enjoy much free time because we have to do homework after the school is over. In the evening we get some time to play.

I like fishing very much but never got an opportunity for this activity. Samoan children were really lucky who enjoyed fishing everyday. I wish this activity had been a part of my growing up.

Q. 2. *Were Harmeet and Shonali correct in saying that Harmeet's mother did not work?* (NCERT Textbook, page 49)

Ans. No, they were not correct. Harmeet's mother did a lot of work inside the home. As her work was not paid, Harmeet and Shonali developed a notion that she did not work.

Q. 3. *What do you think would happen if your mother or those involved in doing the work at home went on a strike for a day?* (NCERT Textbook, page 49)

Ans. My daily routine will be disturbed. I will have to do all the household work instead of going to school. I will have to prepare lunch for the family. My father will have to face problems because he depends on my mother for everything. He does not even know where my mother keeps his clothes. He can not imagine to go to office without her assistance.

- Q. 4. Why do you think that men and boys generally do not do housework? Do you think they should?

(NCERT Textbook, page 49)

Ans. They generally do not do housework because they think that males are meant for outside work while females are associated with inside work. They sometimes also feel that it will be against the norms of the social set-up if they get themselves involved in the housework.

- Q. 5. Study the table given below and answer the questions that follow:

State	Women paid (work hours per week)	Women unpaid (Housework hours per week)	Women (Total)	Men paid (work hours per week)	Men unpaid (Housework hours per week)	Men (Total)
Haryana	23	30	?	38	2	?
Tamil Nadu	19	35	?	40	4	?

What are the total number of work hours spent by women in Haryana and Tamil Nadu each week? How does this compare with the total number of work hours spent by men?

(NCERT Textbook, page 50)

Ans. The total number of work hours spent by women in Haryana each week is 53 hours and that in Tamil Nadu is 54 hours. In comparison to this, the total number of work hours spent by men in Haryana is 40 hours and that in Tamil Nadu is 44 hours.

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS SOLVED

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Q. 2. Housework is invisible and unpaid work.

Housework is physically demanding.

Housework is time consuming.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

