

Women Change the World

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1. How do you think stereotype, about what women can or cannot do, affect women's right to equality?

Ans. It is still considered that women are, good at only certain jobs. Many people believe that women make better nurses because they are more patient and gentle. This is linked to women's roles within the family. It is also believed that science requires a technical mind and girls and women are not capable of dealing with technical things. These concepts or beliefs are deeply rooted in the mind-set of this male-dominated society. Several people believe in these stereotypes. As a result many girls do not get the same support that boys do to study and train to become doctors and engineers. Sometimes even very talented girls are put behind walls. There are many families in which once, girls finish school, they are encouraged by their families to see marriage as their main aim in life of our society. Thus, we see that stereotypes, badly affect women's right to equality. It is the need of the hour to come out these stereotypes and think sensibly about our girls.

2. List one reason why learning the alphabet was so important to women like Rashsundari Devi, Ramabai and Rokeya.

Ans. Learning the alphabet was so important to women like Rashsundari Devi, Ramabai and Rokeya because only through this way they could bring confidence in themselves and fulfil their dreams.

3. 'Poor girls drop out of school because they are not interested in getting an education.' Re-read the last paragraph on page 62 and explain why this statement is not true.

Ans. The statement—Poor girls drop out of school because they are not interested in getting an education —is not true. There are several reasons behind it:

- (i) In many parts of the country, especially in rural and poor areas, there are neither proper schools nor teachers who teach them on a regular basis.
- (ii) There is no transport facility. If a school happens to be far from people's home, parents show unwillingness to send their girls to school.
- (iii) Many families are very poor. They are unable to bear the cost of educating all their children. In such a situation boys get preference and girls are forced to stay indoors.

4. Can you describe two methods of struggle that the women's movement used to raise issues? If you had to organise a struggle against stereotypes, about what women can or cannot do, what method would you employ from the ones that you have read about? Why would you choose this particular method?

Ans. The two methods of struggle that the women's movement used to raise issues are:

(i) Campaigning: It is an important part of the women's movement to fight discrimination and violence against women. It has led to new laws being passed. A law was passed in 2006 to give women who face physical and mental violence, some legal protection. The women's movement led the Supreme Court to formulate guidelines in 1997 to protect women against sexual harassment at the workplace and within educational institutions.

The women's movement also raised the issue of dowry - deaths. As a result of their campaigns, this became a public issue in the newspapers and society. The dowry laws were changed to punish families who seek dowry.

(ii) Rising Awareness: It is also an important part of the women's movement. It raises public awareness on women's rights issues. Their message has been spread through street plays, songs and public meetings.

I had to organise a struggle against stereotypes, about what women can or cannot do, I would prefer to employ campaigning method.

I think this method would prove successful. Various types of issues related to women are conveyed to the people at a mass level. This method would make people aware. By campaigning I would go to the decision-making authority and force it to do the needful in this connection.