

Chapter 8

Bholi

Read and Find Out Pg-47

Q. 1 Why is Bholi's father worried about her?

Ans.: Bholi was neither intelligent nor beautiful. A part of her brain got damaged when she fell from the cot in her childhood. She had small pox when she was two years old and it left pock marks on her entire body. She also stammered while speaking which often made her an object of ridicule. This made Bholi's father worry about her future and marriage.

Q.2 For what unusual reasons is Bholi sent to school?

Ans.: The tehsildar came to inaugurate the primary school for girls in Bholi's village. He asked Ramlal to send his daughters to school to set an example before others. However, Ramlal's wife was of the view that nobody would marry a girl who goes to school. Hence, she opposed sending the girls to school but Ramlal could not disobey the tehsildar. This made them send Bholi to school since they were of the view that Bholi's physical drawbacks would always serve as an obstacle in her marriage so it wouldn't make any difference if she went to school.

Read and Find Out Pg-48

Q.1 Does Bholi enjoy her first day at school?

Ans.: Bholi was unaware of what a place like school was. She was fearful when she was being sent to school. Initially, she compared her situation with that of a cow who was turned out of the house and sold. When Bholi reached school, she was fearful. When she looked around and saw other girls in school, she felt a bit relaxed and thought that she might make some

good friends. When the teacher asked her name and she stammered, the other girls laughed at her and she felt ashamed of herself. However, she went home happy as the teacher motivated her to study and attend the school regularly to become learned and confident.

Q.2 Does she find her teacher different from the people at home?

Ans.: Yes, she finds her teacher very different from the people at home. The teacher understood her problem and motivated her to put in efforts to overcome her problem of stammering. She taught her in a systematic manner and motivated her to attend school regularly.

Read and Find Out Pg-51

Q.1 Why do Bholi's parents accept Bishamber's marriage proposal?

Ans.: Bholi's parents were of the view that her physical injury, appearance and lingual drawback would prove to be obstacles in her marriage. Since Bishamber was from another village he didn't know much about Bholi and had proposed to marry her without any dowry. However, Bishamber was Bholi's father's age and had a problem with his limb and his children from the first wife were grown-ups. Since Bishamber was a well to do shopkeeper, Bholi's parents considered him as the best match for their daughter and accepted his proposal.

Q.2 Why does the marriage not take place?

Ans.: At the time of the garland ceremony when the veil slipped back from Bholi's face, Bishamber saw the pock marks on her face after which he demanded five thousand rupees from her father. Bholi's father put his turban on Bishamber's feet and tried to persuade him but Bishamber was adamant. This enraged Bholi and she decided not to marry a heartless man like Bishamber.

Think About it

Q.1 Bholi had many apprehensions about going to school. what made her feel that she was going to a better place than her home?

Ans.: Initially, Bholi was frightened to go to school because she was unaware about the place. She compared her situation with her cow which was taken out of the house a few days ago and then sold. However, she was dressed well for the first time in her life and oil was rubbed into her dry hair. Her parent's changed behavior made her feel that she was being sent to a place better than her home.

Q.2 How did Bholi's teacher play an important role in changing the course of her life?

Ans.: Bholi was a shy and innocent girl. She fell from a cot when she was ten months old which damaged a part of her brain so she was not as sharp as other children. She could not speak till she was five and when she eventually did, she stammered. When Bholi went to school for the first time and her teacher asked her name, she stammered and everyone laughed at her. This made Bholi very upset. She was conscious of her pock marks as well.

Her teacher didn't laugh at her. She motivated her to speak and attend school daily. She assured her that one day she would become the most learned in the village and no one would dare to laugh at her.

Her teacher's words motivated her and Bholi became a sensible and confident girl.

Q.3 Why did Bholi at first agree to the unequal match? Why did she later reject the marriage? What does this tell about her?

Ans.: Bholi was a simple and innocent girl who didn't want to upset her parents. She knew that no one would agree to marry her as she was neither beautiful nor intelligent and that her parents would not take a wrong decision. Besides this, Bishamber didn't demand anything as dowry which lessened the pressure on her father.

During the garland ceremony, when the veil slipped back from her face Bishamber saw the pock marks and demanded five thousand rupees from her father. Bholi's father put his turban at Bishamber's feet but Bishamber adamantly told him that he would not marry her if he wasn't given the amount. The situation enraged Bholi and she threw the garland and rejected the marriage.

Bholi was no more shy and innocent but sensible and confident.

Q.4 Bholi's real name is Sulekha. We are told this right at the beginning. But only in the last but one paragraph of the story is Bholi called Sulekha again. Why do you think she is called Sulekha at that point in the story?

Answer:

The word Bholi means a simpleton. Throughout the story she had been a simpleton who hardly expressed her opinion on any matter. The word Sulekha means 'a person with a beautiful sense of letters'. In this story this word has a larger meaning of being a literate, intelligent and mature individual. After her education, Bholi has really changed to Sulekha and her assertion at the time of her marriage is her announcement to the world that she is no more a Bholi, but is a Sulekha.

Q.5 Bholi's story must have moved you. Do you think girl children are not treated at par with boys? You are aware that the government has introduced a scheme to save the girl child as the sex ratio is declining. The scheme is called Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Save the Girl Child. Read about the scheme and design a poster in groups of four and display on the school notice board.

Answer: Students Do Your Self

Talk about it

Q.1 Bholi's teacher helped her overcome social barriers by encouraging and motivating her. How do you think you can contribute towards changing the social attitudes illustrated in this society?

Ans.: There is no doubt that Bholi's teacher helped her overcome social barriers by encouraging and motivating her. It was her teacher's motivation that she had the courage to cancel her marriage when the groom insulted her father.

Such social evils exist at all levels in the society. They can only be eradicated by creating awareness among people and making them realize that it is the inner self of a person that should be valued and not just the appearance. Bholi's family should have encouraged her to move on in life and overcome her lingual problem rather than treating her differently. The root cause of these social evils is illiteracy and ignorance.

We should work towards changing people's perspective towards such things. A person's disability should not be mocked at. Such a person should be treated equally. Parents should not take a disabled child for granted. If a child gets motivated at home, he/she has the confidence to face the world.

Q.2 Should girls be aware of their rights and assert them? Should girls and boys have the same rights, duties and privileges? What are some of the ways in which society treats them differently? When we speak of 'human rights', do we differentiate between girls' rights and boys' rights?

Ans.: Yes, girls should be aware of their rights. It's not just about girls, it's about everyone. Even boys should know their rights. Yes, girls and boys should have equal rights, duties and privileges. Both have been created by God so we don't have any right to differentiate between them on any grounds.

However, our society does differentiate between them on many grounds. The society has delegated distinct roles to girls and boys and they are expected to behave accordingly. Girls are generally dominated by boys. Girls are expected to do household chores and boys are expected to work outside. In the present scenario, girls can be seen working in different fields but gender discrimination has still not left its roots.

Girls are generally not sent to school neither are they fed well. However, we need to realize that girls form the backbone of a family so it is very important for them to study and be aware of things.

Girls have been the victim of discrimination since long and in many households, the scenario is still the same. The society needs a change in its perspective so that each girl is treated equally.

Q.3 Do you think the characters in the story were speaking to each other in English? If not, in which language were they speaking? (You can get clues from the names of the persons and the non-English words used in the story?)

Ans.: The story is set in a rural background and the people seem to be not much educated. This makes it clear that English cannot be the language of communication. The names of characters such as Bholi, Sulekha, Lakshmi, Ramlal further point

The protagonist, Bholi didn't even know what a school was and had seen English words for the first time which further indicates that English was not common among the people of the village.