

**ACTiZEN**<sup>®</sup>  
An initiative by DESH APNAYEN

DESH  
APNAYEN

## **Activity on Gender Equality**

Students share stories  
to develop empathy and  
contribute solutions



## Discrimination in gender

This story happened months ago, It was a bright sunny afternoon. ~~in~~ which I was going home from my school and I saw something unbelievable. The thing was something least expected, there was a quarrel happening in front of a bank. There were a bunch of women arguing with the manager of the bank. Slowly the crowd gathered and asked what had happened. The women said that they all got fired just because they were girls, the manager replaced them with adult men who were not as qualified as the girls. Slowly the police, <sup>media</sup> ~~came~~ and the women's rights activists came and sorted the problem. In India there are many cases of discrimination.

Anonymous, Diamond Jubilee High School, Mumbai

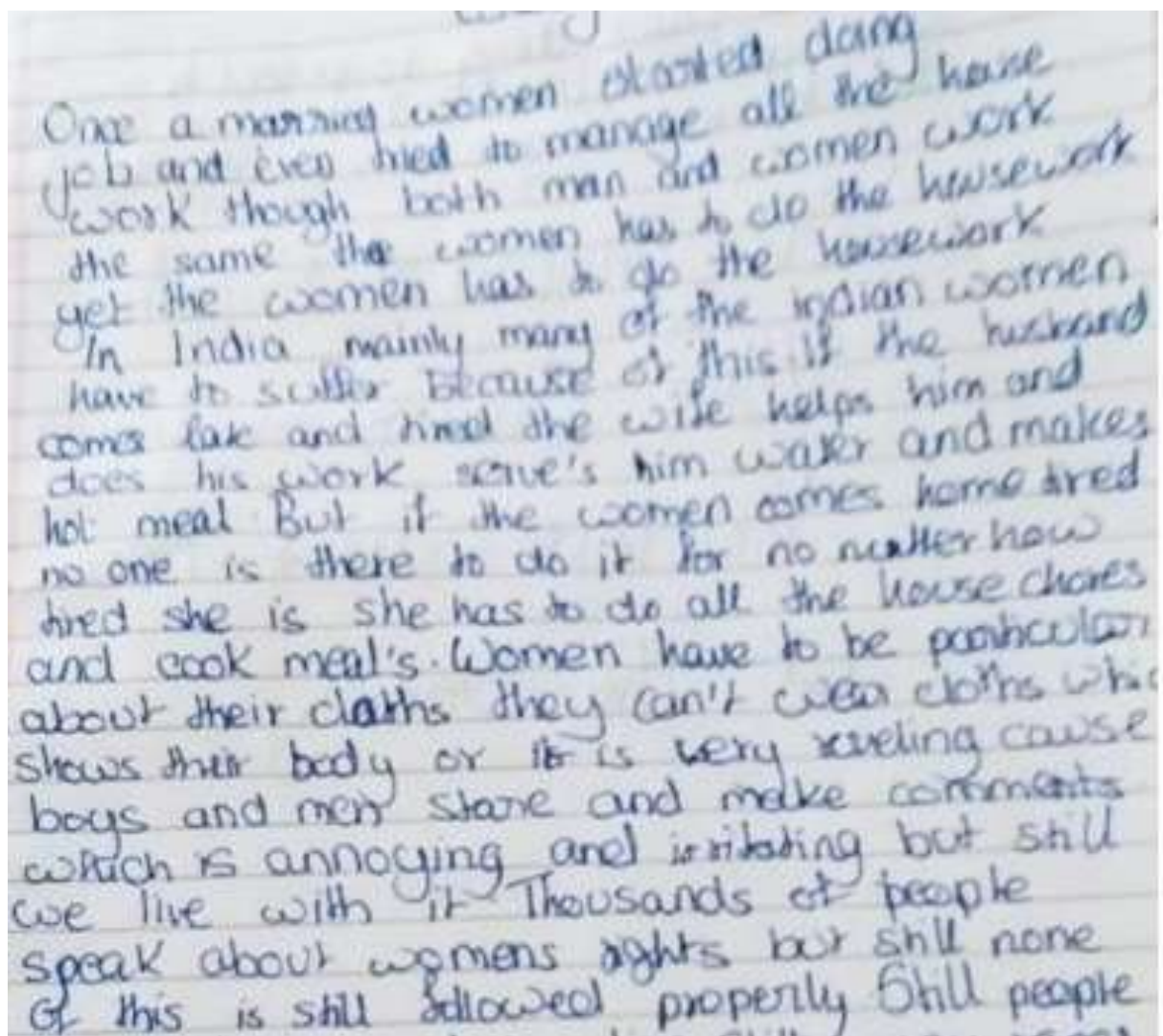
~~Geography~~ History Gender  
~~Once~~ age discrimination

Long time ago there lived a family, they had two kids a daughter and son. Son had many art skills, and the daughter had business skills. When they grew up the daughter wanted to be a business ~~woman~~ woman and the son ~~want~~ wanted to be an Artist, but their ~~dad~~ dad didn't agree to both. He wanted that his daughter should sit at her house and do art work, ~~and~~ and he also wanted his son to do business. So he forced their children. This caused great resentment among the children. God always send a good angle with everyone. So the good angle was the daughters husband. The husband and daughter lived in ~~the~~ foreign country so he allowed her wife to do business. ~~he~~ ~~also~~ ~~stop~~ ~~The~~ The daughter's ~~at~~ husband son's business was also in foreign country so the daughter's husband also suggested him to leave the business ~~and~~ and do art work. Both the ~~children~~ children lived happy ever after.

## Anonymous, Diamond Jubilee High School, Mumbai

One of such things I have noticed is that when it comes to choosing careers for boys, they are given the freedom to choose anything they want or they wish for, whereas girls are not given that much of freedom to choose their career. One of my sister who was interested to choose modelling as her career was not allowed to do so because she is a girl whereas my brother who also wished to be a part of Bollywood industry was given permission because he is a boy and is strong enough to protect himself and take right decisions while girls will get fooled easily by anyone so my sister was not permitted to choose that career and had to change her decision.

## Anonymous, Diamond Jubilee High School, Mumbai



Once a married women started doing job and even tried to manage all the house work though both man and women work the same the women has to do the housework get the women has to do the housework. In India mainly many of the Indian women have to suffer because of this if the husband comes late and tired the wife helps him and does his work serve's him water and makes hot meal. But if the women comes home tired no one is there to do it for no matter how tired she is she has to do all the house chores and cook meal's. Women have to be particular about their clothes they can't wear clothes which shows their body or it is very revealing cause boys and men stare and make comments which is annoying and irritating but still we live with it. Thousands of people speak about womens rights but still none of this is still followed properly still people

One time ~~we~~ our family had moved to Hyderabad from Mumbai like In Mumbai everyone would like to be awake till late night and ~~move~~ go out for dinner or go for long drive. Including women were allowed to do all this but when we came here in Hyderabad their routine was exactly opposite to our state. One time when we I and my brother told my daddy that we have to go out so he told us this is not our Mumbai so that we can go anywhere at any time. And in Hyderabad most of women were discriminated by men and they were not allowed to do their own things like leasing of bike for woman, ~~so~~ if we drive bike in Hyderabad they think that a woman is driving and then our relatives tells us and shouts us that we should not drive bike. So I think they should raise about them in court for discrimination or they should do a march on discrimination on genders.

## Anonymous, Diamond Jubilee High School, Mumbai

### Story Gender discrimination

The friends.

One day there were <sup>boys</sup> children playing in a park. There was a girl who had skills in their area few days back. She <sup>had</sup> no friends in the area. She tried to make friends with the boys playing in the park but they told her that she is a girl we can't play with her. She went everyday to play but the boys didn't play with her saying that she is a girl, she is weak, she can't play games like cricket & football they are boys games. That girl went to her mom and complained that there are no friends of mine & I have no one to play with. ~~But~~ Her mom went to the boys' moms to tell that their children don't let my child play with them. Their moms also said that a girl can't play with boys.

Anonymous, Diamond Jubilee High School, Mumbai

importance. Even in my building there were many people who were like girls can't play cricket you girls are interested in girlish gossips you all can't play cricket. Why only girls are gone through acid attacks, rapes, bulley? And I give an example In Nirbhaya's case we have spend 7 years and 3 months that was so injustice. Like why only girls that girls cannot wear short clothes. Cannot know go out after 9:00 clock. My motive is that why all the restriction too girls only why not boys. If boys do anything than alright. But if girls do anything It's a big thing. My one friend talks to a boy who is not a friend but still are building people thing over.

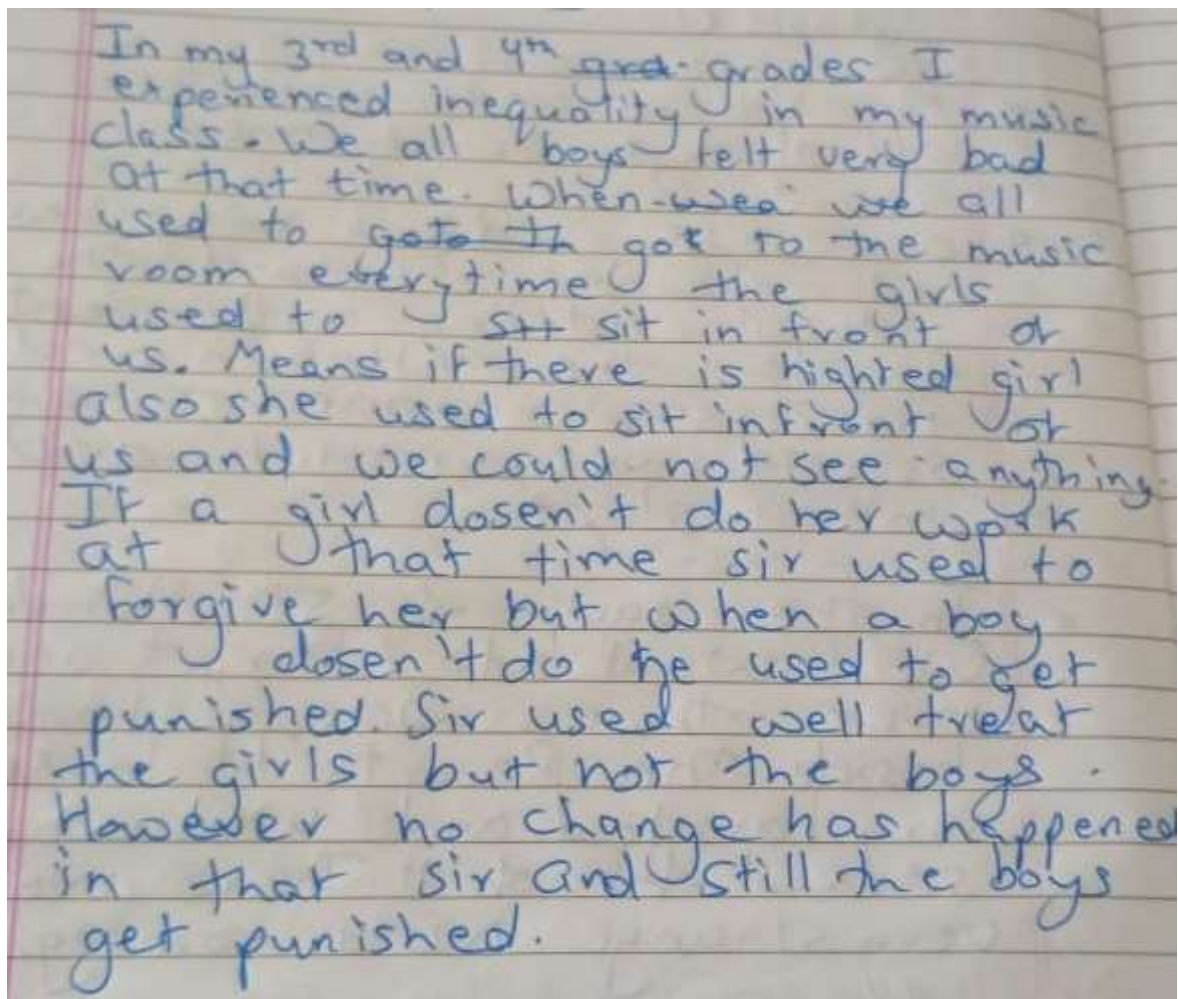
## Gender Discrimination

Page No.	
Date	

Shiela was 10 years old, she was studying in a Rural School. She was very good in her academics and sports too, but she was not given any opportunity by the headmasters. Only the boys were given chances to go and participate in athletics and competitions. She went and told her parents that she has interest in sports and academics. But her parents told that she is a "girl" and she should do housework and cook food only, you should not go into any "boy's" matters. On the annual sports day the team captain got a fracture so Shiela had to be replaced with the Captain. Everyone thought that they lost, because the captain was a girl. But ~~the~~ Shiela performed so well that their team won and all of them understood that girls and boys should be equal. And this is a lesson to all.



## Anonymous, Diamond Jubilee High School, Mumbai



## Jia Biswas, HVB Global Academy, Mumbai

My real-life experience of gender inequality is through my neighbourhood. They had two children, a boy and a girl. They took the admission for their son in an IB school whereas for their daughter they took admission in an SSC board, as there was a difference in fees. They had thought that as if the girl will get married and take care of households so she doesn't need prime education not only this but the boy was given special attention to his needs and wants whereas the girl was taken for granted.

Another experience was from my cousin's office, over there the females are paid less compared to males even though they work the same number of hours and have the same qualification.

In my class, once the boys were playing arm wrestling and my friend approached and asked if she could join them but the boys said it's not your cup of tea because it is traditionally instilled in males mind that females are inferior to them in every aspect of life.

## Raghuram Vedantam, Pawar Public School, Dombivali, Mumbai

1.

One Day, my friend was travelling in a bus, a person sat next to her and started rubbing his hands to her sides, she felt that it was a mistake but, he continued to do it for a long time. Then, my brave friend, stamped his feet with her long heels and hit him to the side using her elbow. He got up abruptly and learnt a valuable lesson.

2.

Another tale is of my friend's mother. In her childhood my friend's mother was not allowed to study, though she had a keen interest in learning how the things around her work. She was completely forbidden from study by her father who was an alcoholic. Her mother used to fight with her father and there were a few days when, she was beaten up very hard by her husband. My friend's mother regrets this to this day and aims to not let this happen to any other girl. She is being educated now in elders' schools, yet she is unhappy about this rude society and its old customs.

3.

Not only women, but also men are facing gender inequality. My friend has an exceptionally soft and light voice, due to which many people tease him. Some even teased him to be a girl, including elders.

4.

A person in my society is a gay. Many people are upset with him and do not even try go near him. Whenever he/she crosses someone, people remark, "His day is going to be bad". He has no friends except my family and a few other families. He feels really bad all day thinking of why god created him that way and why he could not live the same life as others. I meet him in a frank and friendly way as there is no need to be rude to people in our own locality.

5.

There is a middle-class family consisting of twins, a daughter, and a son. Both of them studied well, but the girl child was highly intelligent. They both wrote EAMCET and the girl qualified in flying colours, but the boy got passing rank. When it was the time to take admission into the college, the girl child was neglected, and the boy was made to join the college through paid quota. The girl was made to study BA. When the girl asked her father for a reason, he said, "As we are a middle-class family, I will only be able to take the burden of one child's higher education. So, I chose him, who will be taking care of us in our old age. However, you are going to marry and go to other's house." Ironically, now, these old parents, who rejected her from studying are now being taken care of by their so-called daughter.

## J R Sailakshman, Agurchand Manmull Jain School, Chennai

The most common aspect of gender discrimination which I have experienced are: -

- Not educating the girl child.
- Early marriage or child marriage.

## Ekta Gupta, Agurchand Manmull Jain School, Chennai

educated. I have not experienced any kind of discrimination but I have heard many things about it. Many time I have noticed that women are cooking at home but why in hotels men are cooking. ~~In hotels~~ As there are many restrictions for women ~~at~~. In many workplaces women are not getting equal importance and they are ~~also~~ they are feared to go work because men are passing comments and molesting women.

## Keerthika L, Shri B S Mootha Girls Senior Secondary School, Chennai

I have seen that gender-based discrimination starts in our very homes where women are supposed to do the household chores whether or not they are interested. Men consider doing household chores as a disgrace or a belittling of their dignity. Not just women, men are also subjected to discrimination on the basis of what they are, what they wear, what they represent or what they support.

## Gender Equality

Short story of Farzana on Gender Discrimination in Indian family.

I am a girl. I am an Indian girl. I am luck to be born. I escaped the cruel hands of death. When I was still in my mother's womb. I am a lone girl. I have two brothers, younger. I watch them eat special. My share is the left overs, if any, I watch them wear colourful clothes. I am luck if I get a new one once in a while. I help my mother in chores. I watch my brothers play. I help my mother in chores. I watch my brothers play. I stand at the door to relax. I am called in for. I am a girl.

I long to go to school. I beseech my parents. I am told I can't go for I am a girl. I want to become a teacher or doctor. I love teaching. I yearn to serve the ill. I want to follow "Mother Teresa." Where from the money will come? My brothers are to be educated. I get denied. And where from will the money for my dowry come? I am taught to be polite. I am taught to be patient. I am taught

to take every affront with a smile. It is my fate.

I am grown up. I am to be given away in marriage. I say "I don't want to marry. I want to study." "What will a girl do with education? Will she rule? Look at your mother, is she educated? Is it she happy?" I say, "times have changed." "But girls remain girls, a burden on parents." I stand bedecked before a groom and family. I feel like a commodity in a bright show case. I am asked if I can cook, sing and sew. I sing the praise of God that hasn't been on my side. I am asked to walk to see that I am not lame. I am liked by the groom and family. I retreat inside. I hear haggling over dowry. I hear my father begging. Finally my marriage is fixed.

I am married now. My husband's home is my home now. I am an illiterate. Still I fulfilled the six qualities of a woman & housewife. I hear only complaints. I haven't brought sufficient dowry. I haven't brought enough gold. I haven't brought adequate jewellery. I bear every taunt with a smile. Taunts worsen, become invective. Invective turns into violence. I am slapped. I am kicked. I am pulled by hair. I escape. One day I go to my father's home. I narrate my sordid married life. I am told it is

my karma. I am taught my place is with my husband. I am sent back with apologies to my husband and family. I return to abuses and blows. I realize my husband is a drunkard and a debauchee. I am stunned when he brings home his concubine. I complain to his parents. I am told it isn't unusual. I am told my husband is virile. I am bludgeoned for complaining. I am threatened with divorce. I am afraid. I keep quiet.

The brutalities increase. I finally get support from mother, a woman. I am rejected and 'returned' as demands are not met. I am divorced. I return to father's home to more taunts and abuses by father, siblings and neighbours. I do chores in homes earn to give to parents. I, a divorcee, am now the target of every lust-filled eye. I finish chores and hurry home head bent. I learnt to ignore taunts and jibes but still they hurt. I am told by mother I have to live with it. I am a woman 'left by husband'.

I am asking you. I want answers. What is my fault? What is my sin? Is it my fault that I am born a girl? Is it my fault that I am born in India? Is it my fault that I am illiterate? Is it my

fault that I dutifully upheld the six virtues of a woman, a housewife? Is it my fault that my parents discriminated against me for being a girl? Is it my fault that I did not revolt? Is it my fault that I tolerated the physical and mental torture inflicted upon me?

I am asking you. I want an answer. What should I do? Where should I go? Where can I get justice in this country? I am asking to be treated as a human being. Am I asking for too much?

I am asking you. Am I to live? Am I to die? Answer me.

## Aashi Sura, Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai

I would like to narrate two incidents regarding gender discrimination which I have observed in my surroundings.

-Dipa. She is the ever smiling and happy go lucky lady that I have come across ever. She is full of positivity and never complains about anything. Ever willing to lend a helping hand even though her resources may be meagre. She is our domestic help or rather was.

Due to Covid pandemic unfortunately she has gone to her village as domestic helps are not allowed in our building. She lives in our area with her husband and her mother in law. Her husband doesn't work. He makes her do all the work and expects that she comes home during his lunch and dinner time and serve him food.

That lady gets up at 5 in morning, finishes her household chores and begins her day by working in other people's homes. She gets so exhausted but not a word of complain.

My parents always lend a helping hand to her monetarily and my mom always lends an ear when she has something to say. When her husband is sick, she bears the hospitalisation costs and all medical expenses without complaining, while her husband even after recuperating doesn't care about her and goes on with his dependant healthy life.

I feel why should she go through so much. Why her husband cannot work and earn for his family. They both can earn and have a decent lifestyle. Why does the woman have to suffer?

Dipa, being so smart and hardworking, she can easily live alone and fend for herself and live a carefree life. Why does one need a man when he cannot shoulder your burdens and is in fact a burden on you, when you are capable of taking care of yourself?

-Another incident is which has been narrated to me by my mother is about a lady in her office, Nikita. Nikita was a very hardworking and capable young woman. She was working in the sales department of a Mutual Fund Company.

She always got good business, more than her male counterparts. She was also in the good books of her clients who gave her very good reviews. She always reached her targets and never failed to excel. She was due for a promotion that year. She was very excited and couldn't wait for her salary to increase so that she and her mother could move in a bigger apartment leaving the cramped one room apartment that she currently lived in.

Her male counterparts on the other hand were all very well off and lived a very elusive lifestyle. She never got jealous of them but worked that extra mile to reach her targets so that she could gain her promotion on her merits. On the day of the announcements she was shocked to learn that her name had been passed over for promotion in favour of her male colleague who used to play golf with his boss on weekends. She was so disheartened.



**ACTiZEN**<sup>®</sup>  
An initiative by DESH APNAYEN

DESH  
APNAYEN

What can we as **ACTIZENS** do  
to create a more **inclusive**  
**world** where all genders  
can co-exist optimally?

*Let's read what the students shared with us.*



## Khushdeep Kaur, D C Model International School, Ferozepur

I feel that everyone should raise voice against discrimination. If our Constitution has given us right to equality, then society cannot overrule it. For examples, articles should be written in the newspapers, awareness events should be organised in the schools/colleges etc.

## Kumar Suhavan, Prelude Public School, Agra

Here I am going to share real life story a close relative. There was a husband and a wife. They both were working and living happy life.

Suddenly, big crises came, husband lost his job. As there was no gender discrimination in family. Wife continued her job and earning. Husband took over household activities. They happily lived and brought up their children.

Moral of the story: if there is gender equality you can face any kind of crisis.

## J R Sailakshman Agurchand Manmull Jain School, Chennai

- Here are some ways to stop gender discrimination in our society
  - Talk to women and girls. ...
  - Allow girls to use mobile phones. ...
  - Stop child marriage and sexual harassment. ...
  - Make education gender sensitive. ...
  - Raise aspirations of girls and their parents. ...
  - Empower mothers. ...
  - Give proper value to 'women's work' ...
  - Get women into power.

As it was rightly quoted by Angelica Fuentes: - "*Gender parity is not just good for women it's good for societies.*"

## Arianna Jolly, Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai

As long as we all become a little more conscious of our words and actions, as long as we're taught to be empathetic towards each other, we can make this world a better place to coexist.

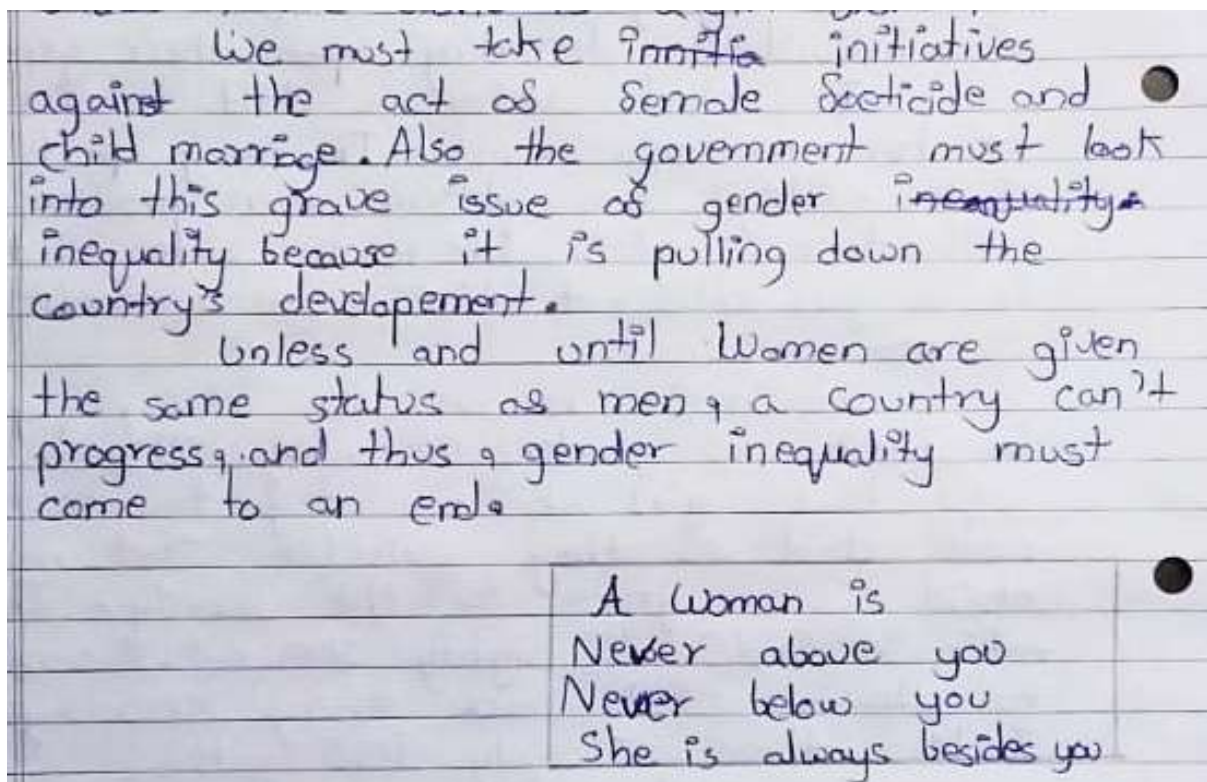
## Aashi Sura, Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai

From these incidents I feel one should never give up. One should always have faith in one's abilities and give their best shot. In Dipa's case I feel I can educate her and teach her to be independent. When I grow up I would like to help the women belonging to these classes by educating them and helping them to live a more dignified life.

## Navhya Shah, Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai

- Share house hold chores and child care
- Reject chauvinist and racist attitudes
- Pay equal salary for both men and women
- Prevent sexual harassment
- Change traditional children's music, rhymes, and finger plays so that they include characters of both genders
- Stop child marriage
- Empower mothers

## Advait More, St. Mary's High School, Mumbai

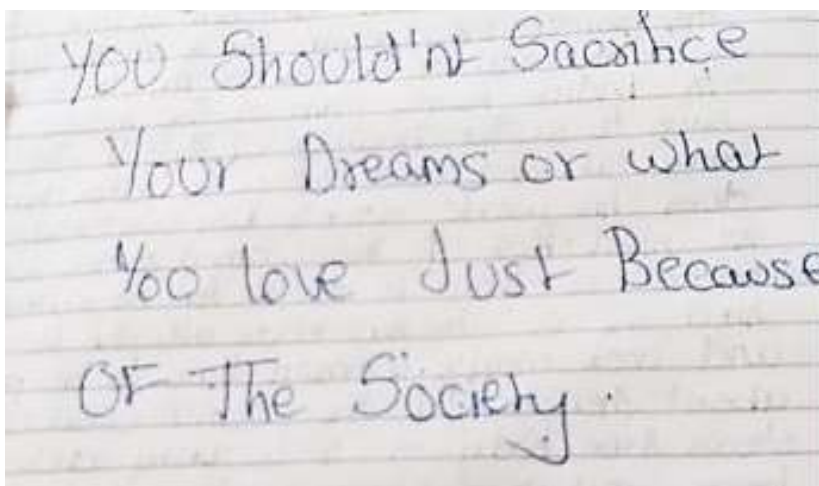


## Keerthika L, Shri B S Mootha Girls Senior Secondary School, Chennai

- Reject racist and chauvinist behaviour: Do not make comments that ridicule, demean or humiliate women, black people, indigenous people, members of the LGBTQ community or any other historically marginalised groups.
- Women should be empowered to gain power: According to 2017 data from UN Women, only 17 countries have female heads of state and/or government. The overall average of women in legislative bodies is only 23.4 percent. The statistics provided clearly shows that women leaders are less supported as compared with men.
- Household chores should be equally shared with the family: Household chores are mainly done by women although it is everyone's responsibility to do so. Therefore, it should be ensured that everyone equally shares the work.
- Equal work should be paid and demanded equally: It is important to pay the same salary for equal work as it ensures gender equality. It should be demanded when it is not implemented.
- Sexual harassment and racism should never be tolerated: Everyone should have a safe platform for reporting bullying, sexual harassment or racism. Proven cases should be treated with zero tolerance.
- Genderless fashion: Men are judged when they wear skirts, make-up or anything that is generally typical to women. Although this has been generalised throughout the years, this generation feels the need to be themselves and wear clothes regardless of how they are judged.

The implementation of all the above will take years and years of changes in mindsets and in the society.

## Anonymous, Diamond Jubilee High School, Mumbai



## Sarthak Khond, St. Mary's High School, Mumbai

Gender Quality - Sarthak Khond

I think, we should not compare boys and girls. We should not tell that 'If we are man, we would do anything, But if you are a girl, you cannot do anything, just sit in your house.' This should we not do to girls. Girls have more brain and are very intellegent then boys. In this 2020, Maharashtra have more percent of girls passed and less percent passed. Girls can do more then boys in the world. That's why, we should not judge boys and girls. Girls have

## Monika D, Shri B S Mootha Girls Senior Secondary School, Chennai

- Continuous efforts towards breaking myths and stereotypes around gender
- Ensuring State accountability to implement various schemes, policies, laws, constitutional guarantees and international commitments
- Institutionalising gender sensitive processes within various systems such as law
- Encouraging community ownership in preventing violations based on gender discrimination

## Gayatri Patwardhan, Cathedral and John Connon School, Mumbai

It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognise, accept and celebrate those differences. For the world to be an equal place, where men and women are treated with the same amount of respect and given the same amount of opportunities, everyone needs to play their part. We need to realise that gender discrimination is not only an issue for women, but also for men.

Unless everyone does not pick up this mantle and be responsible advocates for change, the world is going to continue to discriminate on the basis of gender.

I have never been discriminated against for being a girl. In my family, girls are revered as the goddess 'Lakshmi'. I have always been treated as an individual, my tastes, preferences always taken into account and a lot of times, though I am only 13, my opinion asked on important and petty matters.

I have never been loved less or been limited for being a girl. My school too gives me opportunities to shine. I would say, I live in a cocooned world where I am allowed to have an opinion, I am allowed to express that opinion and I know I will be given due credit for the way I think and feel.

But I know, it is not so in every house, in every city, in the world where we live. I read many books and have been reading about the plight of women in Middle Eastern countries where women do not have the right to speech or expression.

Where they are made to dress up as men so they can go out and work to fend for their families, where they did not have the right to drive their cars!! Where they are married off at a young age, against their will, sometimes to men who are old enough to be their grandfathers.

Even in developed nations, women are not given equal opportunities and pay and the most important question at a lot of interviews is "what will you do when you get married?". Companies are not willing to invest in their women employees because they think that they are not serious contenders.

Independent women are looked down upon as being too modern, someone who will not fit into a family. Even they are pushed around and ill- treated, sometimes beaten up for speaking their mind.

When I see women not being given equal rights, I wonder what goes on in the minds of people who believe women to be the inferior race. If we do not change our mindset as a generation, future generations are going to be impacted with the same struggles that the human race faces today.

In our own country, girls are dropping out of school. Women are not given equal job opportunities and pay as men. Some families even stop their daughters from getting a higher education and just want to get them married off. Girls drop out of sports teams because it is seemed too masculine for a girl to play sport. Women who are seen in athletic wear are shamed upon for their dress code.

In some parts it is even unsafe for women to leave their own houses after sundown! I have seen girls being bullied for wanting to play a sport. Made fun of for wanting to grow up and achieve their dreams.

Men are not given the opportunity to feel sensitive to express their emotions. They are unable to ask for help because of the belief it would make them less of a man. If a boy wants to dress in the color pink, he is regarded as feminine.

Men are forced to take up jobs related to science, engineering- something manly afraid of what society will think. Some even suffer from mental illnesses because they are unable to express themselves. This suppression then causes them to lash out in the later years of their lives and many people face the consequences.

If we want to stop gender-based inequality we should try and make a mental note to include everyone while playing a game or while discussing a topic. While doing a group presentation, we should listen to and try to incorporate everyone's ideas.

I think everyone must pick up this mantle so that women and men are given equal opportunities and men have the chance to feel vulnerable and express themselves.

It is the responsibility of every family, every workspace to create an environment where a woman can get an education, work, raise a family and have enough 'me time' as well.

If we stop defining ourselves as what we are not, and start defining ourselves as what we are, the world will be a much better place to live in.

-----X-----

The above messages were sent by school students to the Desh Apnayen team, as part of one of our activities for schools for September 2020.

Every month, our team creates and sends to teachers four [activities based on a theme](#). Besides taking part in engaging activities, students also get to participate in innovative contests, some of which are held on certain days of national and international importance. All of these initiatives aim to make students **ACTIZENS - alert, informed and active citizens**.

Schools that would like to sign up for activities and updates can write to [info@deshapnayen.org](mailto:info@deshapnayen.org) or 8898890202. Learn more at:

[www.deshapnayen.org](http://www.deshapnayen.org)

[www.facebook.com/DeshApnayen](https://www.facebook.com/DeshApnayen)