

TEXTBOOKS IN TRANSACTION OF GENDER ISSUES IN CLASS

Textbooks and other learning materials are developed centrally in each state and by national agencies. Efforts are being made to rewrite text books to incorporate identified core values including equality between the sexes. However, majority of teachers would still have to use existing text books materials which continue to present women and girls very feebly and that too in stereotyped roles and with negative attributes. Such depictions should be handled by the teachers very carefully.

Presently, text books are likely to have the following flaws:

- i. Predominance of male characters and male authors.
- ii. Men in lead roles and few women shown in service roles that consist of either menial work or assisting roles. ...
- iii. While women are seen as passive, timid, disorganized, weak, silly, etc. qualities attributed to men are fearlessness, courage, bravery, initiative and resourcefulness.
- iv. Visuals show a preponderance of males in action, as teachers, as leaders, as doctors, as farmers, women appear as housewives, mothers, maids, seldom as farmers, factory workers, doctors, pilots or officers.

General Suggestions

In some textbooks girls and women being depicted as fairies, as silly, as timid and cowardly and as witches. Teachers while dealing with such lessons should handle this negative attributes carefully so that no wrong message goes.

Effective pictures and illustrations should be shown to the children that a woman is not merely a mother but she can be a teacher, a doctor, a professor, an engineer, an administrator, a politician, a diplomat, a captain of a ship, a pilot of a plane, a social reformer or a social worker like Mother Teresa, a freedom fighter, a lover of wild animals, etc. The pictures and illustrations showing women in the above capacities should abound on the walls of classrooms and in the textbooks, as well as in the Supplementary Readers.

The teacher should guide and teach the students through visual aids like pictures, puppets depicting women working in the fields as hard as men, working in the hospitals side by side with the members of the other sex, working in factories side by side with men, facing and handling heavy and dangerous machines for long hours,

and attending to the household duties such as lifting water from a well, cutting firewood and washing clothes in cooperation with men.

The teacher should on occasions invite women writers, artists, musicians and such other talented personalities to talk to them or give performances before them displaying their talent. The teachers should counter the prejudices that may raise their ugly heads in the lines of the textbooks.