

Growing up as Boys and Girls

Q1. Are the statements given alongside true or false? Support your answer with the use of an example,

- (a) All societies do not think similarly about the roles that boys and girls play
- (b) Our society does not make a distinction between boys and girls when they are growing up
- (c) Women who stay at home do not work
- (d) The work that women do is less valued

Answer:

(a) True. More importance is given to the work done by boys instead of the ones done by girls. Our society believes that boys and girls have different roles. Broadly, our societies are mostly patriarchal, i.e. a man is always the head of the family. For example, in Indian society, boys are encouraged to do outside work, and girls are encouraged to manage household chores. However, in some Latin-American countries, both boys and girls are encouraged to manage both external and domestic work.

(b) False. Right from the outset of their growing phase, our society makes it a point to distinguish between boys and girls. From an early age, boys are taught to be tough and serious while girls are taught to be coy and soft. Toys like guns and cars are given for boys to play while girls will be given dolls

(c) False. Women who stay at home do a lot of household work. They cook, wash clothes, sweep the floor, and do many other things; some of which are very strenuous.

(d) True. Despite the fact that women do a lot of work, their work is undervalued. One of the reasons why this happens is that there is no monetary value attached to it, social conditioning that domestic work comes naturally to women and it is expected of them.

Q2. 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.

Answer:

Invisible: It means work that is not visible in our eyes. For example, the main responsibility for homework and caregiving tasks, such as caring for the family, especially children, the elderly, and sick members, lies with women. There are functions or tasks that are often not recognized as tasks 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 chores that take longer. For example, women's routines begin in the morning and continue until late into the night. During this period, they appear busy fulfilling the needs and desires of their family member. They often sit with their children and help them complete their homework. This is a good example of time-consuming work.

Q3. 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?

Answer: List of Toys and Games

BOYS Toys

Cars
Ball
Bull dozer
Bat and cricket ball
Swimming kit
Bus
Railways (train)
Dog, Lion, Wolf

GIRLS Toys

Dolls
Cooking apparatus
Washing kit.

Boys Games

Kabaddi
Cricket
Hockey
Basket Ball
Volley Ball

Girls Games

Hide and seek
Playing with dolls
Badminton
Table Tennis
Also games played by boys.

It is clear from the above list that society clearly distinguishes between boys and girls from its growing stage. Boys are taught to be tough and strong which exposes their masculine characteristics but girls are expected to be in the realm of their feminine qualities. Finally, it gives the message to the household that adult men and women have special roles as they grow up. Later in life, it can also have adverse effects when it comes to choosing a career.

Q4. If you 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.

Answer: Sakshi has been working in my home for many years as a domestic help. She comes from a village on the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border. She lives here in Bangalore with her husband and a daughter, who are currently doing B. Com from a reputed institute.

She arrives at around 7.30 in the morning and is up for the day by 6:00 in the evening. She does her work with utmost dedication and skill, never once fussing or complaining about the work she has done.

He gets Rs.5000 / - every month along with other facilities like food, clothes etc. Her husband is involved in making wax mannequins for clothing shops, earning them a handsome sum of money every day. Thus, Shanti is living a happy and fruitful life with us and her family members.