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Editorial

Salwan Education Trust is pleased to release its first e-newsletter of the Platinum Jubilee Special Edition series. We embark upon this momentous journey by addressing two of the most important issues of our time i.e. Early Childhood Education and Gender Sensitization . These issues are of profound importance to the young learners of this generation, to whom the baton of development is being passed on.

Gender disparity in our cultural sphere constantly remains the central concern in today’s time. The genesis of formal learning is vital to impart correct values to the new generation. School culture is a significant aspect considered pertinent in gender education, which is moulded through the rules, norms, values and beliefs envisaged and through the curriculum.

As researchers put it, high-quality early education and child care have always given positive results with hallmark qualities of improved social skills, better grades and self-efficacy skills. Experiences influence every child’s development with long term consequences.

Value teaching coupled with constructive qualities from childhood in institutions will go a long way to contribute to nation-building and creating responsible citizens.

**Capacity Building Team
Salwan Education Trust**

Platinum Jubilee Celebrations Mahayagya

The Salwan Education Trust strides into its historic 75th year since its inception in 1941. The Platinum Jubilee celebration commenced with a *Mahayagya* held on 22nd April 2016 to mark this glorious accomplishment.

The *Mahayagya* a first of its kind in the history of any Education Society was held in the school grounds to invoke the blessings of the Almighty, witnessed the gathering of illustrious alumni, members of the Trust, parents and students with adoration and enthusiasm. Twelve acclaimed Acharyas from Kashi Vishwanath performed the *yagya* on the twelve *kunds* erected for the grand occasion. The main *kund* was represented by the Trust and the eleven other *kunds* represented the Eleven Salwan Schools.

A captivating moment was when the school choir echoed the school ground with melodies like *Lab pe aati Hai dua* and *Pitu Maat Sahayak* caroled at Salwan Sanatan Dharam school in 1941 during its initial years.

Shri Harpal Singh, Trustee, Salwan Education Trust, Mentor and Chairman Emeritus Fortis HealthCare, Chairman of the Impact Group and the Founder and Chairman of Nanhi Chhaan Foundation presented the keynote address. He inspired the young Salwanians to be wise, alert, respectful and good citizens with love and pride for their country.

Shri Sushil Dutt Salwan, Chairman, Salwan Education Trust along with Miss Bahaar Batra and Master Shivam Dixit from Salwan Schools extended the vote of thanks '*Shukrana*'. In their speech they thanked the Almighty and the Salwan fraternity who have been instrumental in helping Salwan Schools to become institutions of excellence. They also apprised the esteemed gathering about the various activities that have been planned as part of the year long Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

After the *yagya*, *mahabhoj* was organized for all the guests.

SPS- Rajendra Nagar



IMBIBING VALUES AT THE RIGHT AGE

Inculcating values in children requires nurturing, effort and spending time with the children. Today outside influences like peer pressure and the entertainment industry—through the Internet, television, movies, video games and music—seem to have a greater effect on children, shaping their perspectives more than ever before. It is all the more important that:

Teachers and Parents work together for a common goal

1. Be a Role Model

Children learn from seeing how you treat them, overhearing your interactions with others and observing what you do in different situations throughout the day. If you want your children to exhibit values like honesty, self-respect and compassion, then you need to show these qualities yourself.

2. Apologize when you make mistakes

When you fall short with the children, not only do you need to acknowledge your mistake, you also need to tell them you are sorry. This shows that you value and respect their thoughts, perspectives and feelings. You are also teaching them an important way to show respect to others, and how to accept responsibility for your mistakes.

3. Use every day experiences as a springboard for conversation

Use everyday incidents as conversation starters. It could be an incident you hear about in the news, something you or the children do or something you and they observe someone else do.

4. Read books with the children

Plan some reading time with the children, each exploring a different moral virtue. You can spend one week on honesty or gratitude, and then about qualities like compassion or generosity. Help the children see that what you're teaching them about right and wrong is not simply your own ideas, but is also written in books.

5. Share your personal experiences

Be willing to share real time line stories of yours with the children, especially those that illustrate how you made choices that were consistent with good values. You may also share some stories where you made bad choices and had to learn some lessons the hard way. Try to help them learn from your mistakes so that they don't have to suffer the same consequences you did.

6. Hold the children accountable for their mistakes

The children may get themselves into trouble now and then for example, broken the neighbour's window playing football, or has hit someone. You may be tempted to rush in and immediately try to "make things better" for them but don't. If you rescue your children every time they make a mistake, they won't take responsibility for their actions. They need to know that bad choices result in unpleasant consequences.

7. Don't let the children take the easy way out of challenges

Children should be motivated to finish work they start, even if their endeavours get tough, tiring or mundane. In the process, they'll develop perseverance and responsibility.

8. Involve the children in encouraging and helping others

Make them realize how helpful they can be to others just through simple acts of kindness, such as making get-well cards for people who are sick, befriending shy or new kids at school. Simple things do work.

9. Monitor television viewing and Internet use

When it comes to teaching the children values, minimize their exposure to wrong ideas in the first place. Granted, you can't shelter them from everything, but you can and should limit their exposure to television and the Internet.

10. Applaud good behaviour

When you observe the children doing something good, let them know you are pleased with their actions. "Sincere praise goes a long way in reinforcing behaviours you'd like to see more of."

Communication is the key

The bottom line is that you need to communicate with your children. Talk about what they did right, what they did wrong, how to make better moral decisions, and why you've made certain choices in your own life. It takes time to have these kinds of conversations, but you'll find the results worth the investment. You need to use the time you have with your kids very wisely.

"Make sure you build time into your schedule for consistent, quality, face time with your kids—while they're still kids.

Ms. Raj Kumari
SPS Trans Delhi– Signature City

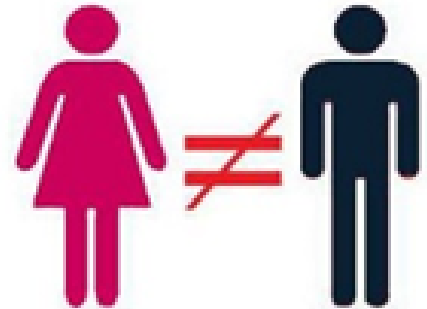


Early Childhood and Gender Sensitivity

"I was a girl in a land where rifles are fired in celebration of a son, while daughters are hidden away behind a curtain, their role in life simply to prepare food and give birth to children."

Malala Yousafzai

Discrimination strikes at the very heart of being human. It is treating someone differently simply because of who they are or what they believe.



Socio-cultural constraints

When a child is born, families immediately start conditioning girls and boys to take on the different roles and behaviours that reflect local norms and values. These social norms can influence whether today's girls and boys get equal access to education.

The most common example is where traditional beliefs favour sons over daughters.

*Let him sleep on the bed,
Clothe him with fine clothes,
And give him jade to play...
When a daughter is born,
Let her sleep on the ground,
Wrap her in common wrappings,
And give broken tiles to play... "*

The Importance of Early Childhood Care: A global priority

Popular sayings such as "learning begins at birth" and "early years are learning years" highlight how important a child's early years are for learning and development.

Just as a high-rise building needs a strong foundation to support the structure above, the foundations for education and life-long learning are laid during the early childhood period.

The child's reality

Research on brain development shows that the brain develops more rapidly in the first three years of life. The brain can be stimulated to develop. Children who do not have a stimulating environment have smaller than normal brains for their age.

Young children are very sensitive to their physical and psychological environments. Boys and girls require:

- ◆ **Safety** - They will not be beaten or hurt physically or emotionally.
- ◆ **Child-friendly** - They play and are active in many ways that they enjoy.
- ◆ **Supportive** - Adults are there to support, protect and involve them in approaches and activities that help them develop their minds, their bodies, their social skills and behaviours.
- ◆ **Nurturing of each child's self-esteem** - Children learn, gain communication skills and participate in a variety of ways. They feel good about who they are.
- ◆ **Gender-sensitive** - Girls and boys receive equal attention and respect. In this and other ways, they learn to value themselves and others equally.

Gender Sensitive Teaching: A Reflective Approach

- A gender-sensitive educator treats girls and boys with the same respect and supports each child to express ideas and participate fully. The educator develops skills to be sure he or she is treating girls and boys equally and not favouring one sex.
- Teachers can also improve these skills in less formal, and sometimes less threatening, ways by taking their own initiative. One simple way is to ask a trusted friend who gives honest, caring advice to observe what is going on in the class. The friend observes: how many questions the educator asks girls and boys, if the 'wait time' given to girls to think through an answer is the same as to boys; how much time the educator spends giving individual feedback to boys compared to girls, whether the tone of voice and comments to girls and to boys are equally supportive, and whether boys and girls equally share classroom tasks and leadership roles. Reflecting on the observer's feedback helps the educator internalize this kind of child-friendly gender analysis.
- Good educators are able to make all children understand clearly what good behaviour is for their age and that there are logical consequences when a child behaves well or badly. For example, if a child does not listen to other children, then that child is not allowed to speak. This helps create space for girls and boys to listen and respect children of the same and the opposite sex.
- Curriculum, guidelines and facilitation aids. All guide educators on how to make the teaching-learning process as participatory and child-centered as possible. Each child has the right to an education and to play.
- Stories, songs, activities and facilitation aids should depict girls and boys in the same roles and men and women in all professions. Females and males should appear as leaders, heroes and problem solvers.
- Role plays and puppet shows are good ways for girls and boys to show the different things they do and know. Likewise, when girls pretend to be boys or fathers, they are learning to understand the other sex. The same applies for boys role-playing female roles. These structured exercises are both fun and educational for children. Educators can then explore what feelings the girls and boys have and build the comfort of both sexes in discussing their feelings. Giving equal time and value to girls' and boys' experience and feelings is one of the first steps on the path to gender equality.
- Gender equality starts with each girl and each boy having a sense of dignity and self-worth. This goes hand-in-hand with respecting the dignity and worth of other boys and girls. Here is the seed that educators have a responsibility to help nourish in all learners. The fruit of this care will be women and men who are full equal partners in their homes, communities and societies.
- Preschoolers should have a voice and be encouraged to make choices, where possible, on activities, books and games within a framework of balanced learning. No toys or games should be reserved for one sex as this often reinforces stereotypes.

- Both girls and boys thrive where there is colour, happy, age-appropriate art, locally-appropriate and comfortable basic furnishings (mats, cushions, child-sized chairs and tables, etc.), adequate light, outdoor play space where they can run and play freely, healthy snacks, water and safe, easy-to-use toilets. Many children feel more at home if they have a special place in the class, for example a special place to put their bottles. The art on the walls or on display includes work by each boy and girl or reflect the ratio of girls and boys in the class. A gender-sensitive educator chooses a doll, a car, or building blocks for a child to play with on the basis of which skills the toys develop, not according to the sex of the child. Promoting gender equality offers educators means to prevent bullying, to support friendships between the sexes and, and it also lessens the stress from gendered expectations experienced by both children and adults.

Suggestions for Parents

- ◆ Pay attention to the characters in the fairytales you are reading to your child. How are characters of different sexes described? What kind of characteristics do they have?
- ◆ Turn traditional gender roles the other way around in your narrative and discuss the historicity of the characters with the child. Do not presuppose the interests of your child. When you offer your child an opportunity for example to participate in playing with dolls or climbing, you make it possible for the child to practice multitudinous skills, feelings, and to claim his or her space.
- ◆ Encourage your child to friendships with both sexes. If adults relate to a girl and a boy playing together as taboo, it may bring unnecessary tension, polarity and confusion to the friendship. Do you yourself talk stereotypically of men, women, boys and girls? Children's views of what is possible, allowed to them, or what is not even considered an option are shaped by the understanding of gender roles in their family and among those closest to them.

Gender-sensitive education is first and foremost about challenging oneself as an adult, and questioning one's own customary ways of thinking.

Ms. Aruna Ralhan
Ms. Sunanda Mishra
Salwan Montessori School
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Mukti-Akanksha

*“ There's more to me than human eye can see,
I am a woman of purpose and destiny,
A perfect design.”*

Gender sensitization simply means the feeling of empathy for the opposite sex. Gender and sex too, have a thin line of demarcation between them. When we talk about the biological difference between a male and a female, we refer to the term sex but while referring to social, cultural and economic status of people, we talk in terms of gender.

There was a time when the role of men and woman were defined differently in our society as she was confined to hearth and house while he was for the fields. Today the scenario has totally changed as people are proud of their mothers, wives or daughters who walk hand in hand with men in all walks of life. But ironically, gender discrimination still exists in some pockets of our societies. Sexual harassment can happen at work places, institutions, in the family and even on the streets. The Nirbhaya incident in Delhi is a bitter example to remind us of the gruesome juncture to which women are exposed in our society.

There is an urgent need to develop a family atmosphere where all members of the family enjoy an equal status, are equally respected and taken care of irrespective of their gender and are treated with empathy. As Gloria Steinem says, “ We’ve begun to raise our daughters more like sons, but few have the courage to raise our sons more like daughters.”

Most of the girls in our school are undergoing a number of physical, psychological emotional and social problems in their home environment. We, as a team of educators are trying our best to give them a safe & secure; healthy & progressive environment for their overall growth. Safety and security of girls is a burning issue of the society today. This calls for utmost priority to provide our girls with a safe, secure & clean environment. The proceedings of rational steps on gender sensitization will help them to excel in academics, sports & co-curricular activities. . If schools play their roles well in gender sensitization, the evils of gender discrimination can be uprooted from the society and there is no doubt that we should be able to create a society where there would be gender equality in true sense.

**Mrs. Ranjit
Mrs. Karuna
Salwan Girls School**

Gender Sensitization in Schools: Creating an Equal World

What we need to know and teach people is the meaning of the word gender, which is being used without understanding the stigma of stereotyping. Choice of professions, playground behavior, toys and general feelings of emotions, strength are all attached with gender stereotyping.

Education is a major force that will help trigger change but this will transpire only when teachers and learners are assisted in adopting classroom initiatives that reflect new images based on a positive gender equity ideology.

Why do we need Gender Sensitization?

Gender sensitization is not about pitting men against women in an arena, but having a sensitive environment wherein both males and females are aware of each other’s rights. The age old patriarchal system has engraved in our minds that we have gender specific roles to play and are taught from a very young age that, boys don’t cry and girls have to marry and carry out the household chores. The discrimination starts right from day one when the child is born, and the hospital staff allocates the boys to the blue cribs and girls in the pink ones. The everyday drudgery of production within the home is regarded as no work is being done and the males being regarded as more superior and stronger beings, the breadwinners who command a greater role in all decision making processes at home.

To minimize these gender issues we need to start changing the mindsets of the younger generation of society as they are those who can bring about further change in society, with their innovative ideas, thoughts and practices.



Curriculum / Text

It is important that all texts, reading materials and books be free of notion of gender inequality as bias maybe embedded in textbooks, lessons and teachers’ interactions with students. Thus gender roles, expectations reflected by written text and pictures should be gender sensitive to promote the concept of gender equality.

Gender Neutral Toys

Gender neutral toys should be given to the children like blocks, puzzles, robot making kits, architectural kits etc. to enhance their creativity, instead of guns, and doll houses.

Use of Gender Sensitive Vocabulary

Gender neutral language needs to be promoted at all levels and throughout institutions for students, faculty and administrative levels. Special watch-out is required for usage of tagging occupations, using feminine endings on words, use of the generic “man”, inconsistency in names and titles, patronizing and to curb demeaning expressions etc.

Teacher Training Programs

Gender sensitivity training needs to be mandatory for all teacher training programs, certificate and academic courses. All teachers should be gender sensitized, especially male teachers must be exposed to gender sensitivity trainings.

School – Parent Partnerships

School -parent partnership needs to be strengthened to identify and address gender issues at home and at educational institutions.

Conclusion

Dr. Sandra Stacki has rightly stated, “.....presence of empowered teachers committed to gender equity in the classroom can be critical to the development of girls into empowered women. Gender-sensitive, empowered women teachers can serve as positive role models for girls and pass on new values to all their students” .

Leadership, empowerment, and gender trainings should be a part of teacher training programs in order to enable teachers not to gender discriminate and give equal opportunities to girls and boys to promote gender equity and equality.

Ms. Neha Taneja
Salwan Public School Afternoon

GENDER EQUALITY – THE ONLY WAY FORWARD

Gender-inclusive education is a basic human right which should be accessible to the young learners of our generation. Life Skills Education has become an integral part of the school curriculum that has enabled our coming generation to effectively deal with demands and challenges of everyday adult life in the emerging globalized society.

Around the world, it has been established that gender inequalities can be best addressed by an education that equips students with life skills - skills that go beyond literacy and numeracy, and assist in the overall cognitive, social, physical and emotional development of all learners. The government has taken various steps to address this issue on the educational front as well as society at large.



Gender Sensitization Modules given by Central Board of Secondary Education :

- ◆ CBSE has prepared several modules to train teachers and help students’ battle stereotypes against women from a young age.
- ◆ The latest syllabus on Health and Physical Education for class I–X developed by the NCERT based on NCF 2005 includes topics related to self-defense under the themes included for upper primary classes such as Human Body, Security and Safety, Self Defense and Protection of Others and Social Health.
- ◆ Gender-responsive life skills-based education can empower young boys and girls to think about their own gender infused behaviour and expectations, and reflect on ways women/ girls and men/ boys see themselves.
- ◆ They are taught to appreciate the importance of developing a critical understanding about gender concerns; offer opportunities to discuss and reflect on sexual orientation and homophobia; and address issues of sexual safety and risk within sexual health education and HIV/AIDS prevention education.

Initiatives taken by the government to promote gender sensitization:

- ◆ The National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) was launched by the Government of India on International Women's Day in 2010 with the aim to strengthen overall processes that promote all-round Development of Women.
- ◆ The Coalition Of Rural Empowerment (CORE) group which functions under the police department has organized workshops on the gender sensitization for the Delhi Police Personnel.
- ◆ State Council for Educational Research & Training (SCERT) which functions under the Education ministry has been engaged in conducting a wide range of programmes since 2000 on the issue of Gender Sensitization. SCERT which design books for the curriculum, have also incorporated chapters on gender sensitization, equality etc. so that the basic values are ingrained amongst students at the initiation stage itself.
- ◆ The Delhi Commission for Women in liaison with the Centre for Social Research arranged workshops on gender sensitization which are organized in all major departments of the Government sector.
- ◆ Due emphasis has been laid by the Education department to actively associate and extend cooperation to Heads of Schools in maintaining overall security in school premises by imparting Self-defense training to students.
- ◆ "Crimes Against Women" Cell is a specialized unit of Delhi Police for redressal of complaints and grievances of women in distress.

As educationists, it is our primary duty to instill positive values in our students so that they can interact and work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and consideration. Let the class rooms be the work shops where young minds can learn the lessons of life with joy and comfort and gear up to work with devotion and to live a wholesome life.

Initiatives undertaken for Gender Sensitization at Salwan Schools

- ◆ Workshops are conducted on Gender Sensitization for teachers and students to increase awareness on Gender issues.
- ◆ Girl Child is given bonus point at the time of admission in pre-primary and primary classes.
- ◆ Salwan Education Trust is an active member and supporter of 'Nanhi Chaan Foundation' which encourages welfare and rights of a girl child.
- ◆ Self-defense training for girls is a regular feature of co-scholastic school clubs.
- ◆ A 'Gender Sensitization Committee' has been set up to promote gender equality amongst students.
- ◆ Counselling sessions are held by the school counselor to sensitize children on gender issues.



Gender Sensitisation: Time to Change the Mindset

**Ms. Poonam Sharma
SPS Mayur Vihar**

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