

Chapter 4

Growing up as Boys and Girls

Q.1 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 distinctions 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 than that of men.

Ans.: (a) True. All the societies in the world do not think similarly. There are two kinds of societies - patriarchal and matriarchal. In India, except a few areas, we have a system of patriarchal where the head of the family is male. It is the male population who is the head of the family and responsible for all the decisions in the family. Whereas in matriarchal societies like Samoan islands head of the family is female and various political and social titles are headed by women population.

(b) False. Our society does make distinctions between boys and girls when they are growing up. The classic example of this distinction we could see in the kinds of toys given to boys and girls for playing. The girls were given dolls to play with, on the other hand, cars were given to boys. Also, things like, how girls must dress, what games boys should play, how girls need to talk softly or boys need to be tough, shows the gender distinctions while growing up.

(c) False. The general notion is that the woman who stays at home does not work. But this is not true. Women who stay at home do almost an equal amount of work as compared to their male counterparts by running

the household, which is not an easy task. On an average, women spend more time working as compared to men. However, their work goes unnoticed because a bulk of their work is household-related and does not contribute to the generation of income.

(d) True. Normally, it is the male population who is responsible for earning for the household expenditures. Hence, the household work done by women is less valued than that of men. All the household chores and caregiving tasks, like looking after the family is the responsibility of women. Men are engaged in outdoor physical activities and their work is valued more than that of housework by women.

Q.2 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.

Ans.: According to the text, Invisible means anything which remains unnoticed. A classic example will be one regular meal which requires lot of preparation and efforts.

Physically demanding means an activity which requires hard work. An example of this is washing clothes and dishes.

Time consuming means something which takes a long time to be done.

Cleaning the house is an example of this.

Q.3 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?

Ans.: This question requires self- explained answer by the students. For your reference, sample answer is given below-

Boys- cars, trucks, outdoor activities like cricket, tennis.

Girls- dolls, any indoor activities like helping mothers in kitchen and other household chores.

One of the major difference between the two lists is that boys are encouraged for outdoor activities whereas girls are being made to be inside the four walls of home. This is because of the society we live. In India patriarchy is practiced which is basically a male dominated society.

Since early years children has been nurtured in a well-defined gender role, that during adult age, they assumed same kind of work. Example- bread earning activities by boys and household work by girls.

Q.4 If you have 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.

Ans.: This is an Activity based question which should be done by the students on their own.