**Contemporary Studies**

**COURSE 010**

**Gender, School and Society**

**MAX MARKS – 100**

**INTERNAL – 20**

**EXTERNAL – 80**

This course is intended to help student teachers understand gender inequality in order to work towards a change in gender relations. It will examine gendered roles and beliefs about gender in society. Student-teachers will critically examine their own role as well as the role of schools, peers, teachers, curriculum and textbooks, etc. in challenging gender inequalities or reinforcing gender equality.

The meaning and experience of being a boy or a girl is not the same across different social groups, regions and time-periods. This course will examine how we learn and challenge these gendered roles in society, through a variety of institutions such as the family, caste, religion, culture, the media and popular culture (films, advertisements, songs etc.), law and the state.

Unequal access of education to girls is a well-documented reality. But the concerns of gender-just education go beyond access to schools; gender identity construction is influenced by forces at home and in society. The seat of power and authority in the Indian societal context is more often than not, firmly rooted in patriarchy. It is important to understand how socialisation into a specific gender influences how we and others look at ourselves and others and what opportunities for education we get. As future teachers, we should understand and examine the role of schools, peers, teachers, curriculum and textbooks, etc. in challenging gender inequalities or reinforcing gender parity. With this purpose, B.Ed. students will be expected to observe and study the distribution of roles and responsibilities in schools and classrooms, rituals and school routines, processes of disciplining distinctly as for girls and boys, and in classroom interaction. Take for example, studying the everyday activities where the majority of girls constitute the assembly choir group and the boys form the inter-school cricket team; girls partnered to be seated with other girl students and boys with boys; sciences associated with boys and humanities with girls; art and craft considered to be the domain of the girls and physical education that of the boys; etc. Teachers need to question such stereotypes and help students rethink their beliefs.

This course will also study representation of gendered roles, relationships and ideas in textbooks and curricula, examining how schools nurture or challenge creation of young people as masculine and feminine selves. Teachers' need help to develop abilities to handle notions of gender and sexuality, often addressing the issues under diverse cultural constraints, their own and their students’, instead of shying away from the same. The formulation of positive notions of sexuality among young people impact larger issues – perceptions of safety at school, home and beyond, identification of sexual abuse/violence and its verbalisation, combating the dominant societal outlook of objectification of the female body, and so on. The course will undertake critical reading of the media which propagates popular beliefs, reinforcing gender roles in the popular culture and by implication, at school.

The student-teachers will develop an understanding of gender issues through a continuous dialogue and engagement and explore the possibilities for using these in their work.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

1. Understanding the role of culture (apart from biology) as determinants of gender distinction in social living
2. Awareness of factors that shape gendered roles in Indian society
3. Understand the problems of girl child education in our society
4. Developing a critical perspective on gender-based discrimination and its effects
5. To provide an introduction to and the development of an understanding of feminist approaches to the social and cultural construction of gender.
6. To develop a critical understanding of intersectionality, including an awareness of gender and its complex intersections with other social and cultural categories, including but not limited to caste, tribe, class, sexuality and ability.
7. To equip the teacher with the ability to create more meaningful and gender just experiences for her students

**CONTENT AREAS**

**Unit 1: Gender: Key Concepts - Social Construction of Gender**

1. Examining one’s own growing up as a boy or a girl
2. Gender, sex, sexuality, patriarchy, masculinity and feminism
3. Gender bias, gender roles and stereotyping, and its consequences
4. Gender and other forms of inequality in relation with (caste, class, ethnicity, disability etc)
5. Female sex ratio and child sex ratio.

**Unit 2: Gender and Schooling**

1. Schooling of girls (literacy rate, drop out rate, completion rate etc) and reasons why girls are not able to complete schooling
2. Why do girls feel uncomfortable in schools?
3. Can schools be different so that more girls can be educated?
4. Gender bias in curriculum, textbooks, analysis of hidden curriculum
5. Critical examination of school and classroom processes– challenging gender biases and stereotypes
6. Understanding relationships within the school – child-child, teacher-child and teacher peer group relationships from the perspective of gender, teacher as an agent of change, life skills and sexuality.
7. Feminization of teaching profession

**Unit 3: Gender and Sexuality**

1. Understanding sexuality (sexual orientation and sexual identity – third gender) and the relationship between power and sexuality
2. Violence against women - empirical examples of the graded violence against women, the impact of conflict and violence on the lives of women, efforts to deal with the issue of violence against women
3. Legal (sexual and reproductive) rights of women

**Unit 4 Psychological and Sociological Perspectives**

1. Radical Feminist
2. Socialist-Feminist
3. Psychoanalytical and other perspectives
4. Recent debates

**Unit 5: Strategies for Change**

1. Policy and management in the school
2. Women’s action groups
3. Mass media

**Suggested workshop themes/practicum**

**Analysis of the textual materials from the perspectives of gender bias and stereotype**

* 1. Telling our own ‘gendered’ stories
  2. En-culturing ‘gendered’ roles in upbringing within different kinds of families – case studies
  3. Gender issues in school education – case studies
  4. Gender issues manifest in contemporary public spaces – case studies
  5. Responding to various forms of gender discrimination organising debates on equity and equality culling cross gender, class.

**Suggested Readings**

1. Gender Analysis of State Policies: A case study of Chhattisgarh, Dr.SenIlina
2. Towards Gender Equality in Education: Progress and challenges in Asia-Pacific Region, R. Govinda, National University of Educational Planning and Administration,New Delhi.
3. Bhattacharjee, Nandini (1999) Through the looking-glass: Gender Socialisation in a Primary School in T. S. Saraswathi (ed.) *Culture, Socialization and HumanDevelopment: Theory, Research and Applications in India*. Sage: New Delhi.
4. Geetha, V. (2007) *Gender*. Stree: Calcutta.
5. Ghai, Anita (2008) Gender and Inclusive education at all levels In Ved Prakash &

K.Biswal (ed.) *Perspectives on education and development: Revising Educationcommission and after,* National University of Educational Planning and

Administration: New Delhi

1. Jeffery, P. and R. Jefferey (1994) Killing My Heart's Desire: Education and Female Autonomy in Rural India. in Nita Kumar (ed.) *Women as Subjects: South Asian Histories.* New Delhi: Stree in association with the Book Review Literacy Trust: Kolkata pp 125-171
2. Ghai, Anita (2006). Education in a globalising era: Implications for disabled girls, *Social Change*, 36 (3) pp 161-176
3. Learning, Livelihoods, and Social Mobility: Valuing Girls’ Education in Central India, Peggy Froerer, Brunnel University, Anthropolgy and Education Quarterly, Vol.43, 2014
4. Mehrotra, D.P., India: Sexism and Patriarchy in the Textbooks, Good Girls are submissive and subsidiary Thursday 22 November 2012, South Asia Citizen’s Web
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