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# UNIT 5 TEACHING AS ACTIVISM

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## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

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“Let craft, ambition, spite  
Be quenched in reason’s night,  
Till weakness turn to might,  
Till what is dark be light  
Till what is wrong be right”

- Lewis Carroll

Training teachers to ensure that they impart quality education, is a world-wide concern. Teachers have responsibility in bringing about change in society by shaping young minds. There are two steps in training a person to become an effective teacher. First, an effective curriculum to train the teachers has to be developed. Secondly, this will in turn ensure that quality education is imparted to students by well-trained effective teachers. In this process, addressing the gender concerns is the need of the hour.

Education was denied to women for many centuries due to social, cultural, and religious practices perpetuated by patriarchy. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the significance of women’s education began to be recognized. Social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Madhanmohan Malviya, Ishwar Chandar Vidhyasagar, Poet Bharathiyar, E.V.R. Periyar, and Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy stressed the importance of women’s education. In 1854, Charles Wood advised the government to give priority to girls’ education and stated that social change can happen only with women’s education. The efforts of social reformers and the government started giving results. In this effort, gender concerns should be

part of course material to train teachers so as to prepare them for future endeavors. It should also address gender justice. So what is it that the teacher should learn and what is his/her role in the society with regard to gender? These issues are discussed in this Unit.

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## 5.2 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- identify teaching as a vocation or calling;
- know how knowledge is constructed and transmitted by the teachers;
- know the role of the text in pedagogical knowledge;
- recognize the need for bringing gender concerns in curriculum and explore existing attitudes, beliefs and social practices with regard to gender; and
- recognize teaching as a form of activism.

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## 5.3 TEACHING AS A VOCATION

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There have been debates in the field of education regarding whether teaching is a 'vocation' or 'calling' (Booth, 1998; Hansen, 1995, 2001; Huebner, 1987). Let us explore what is actually meant by teaching as 'vocation'. According to Merriam Webster dictionary, vocation means "a strong desire to spend one's own life doing certain kind of work and the work that a person does or should be doing". Considering this definition, we need to analyze how prospective teachers identify teaching as a vocation and how a vocation operates in one's life. Parker Palmer and David Hansen provided two approaches to vocation. Both refer to Vocation as "the activity or work that provides personal satisfaction and service to other". Palmer further said "True vocation joins self and service". He quotes the theologian Frederick Buechner's (1973) definition of vocation as "the place where your deep gladness and world's deep hunger meets". According to Hansen "Vocation is a work that results in service to others and personal satisfaction in the rendering of that service" (p.3). Bearing in mind the above definitions we can conclude that vocation is not just about financial security, but more about individuals calling for self-satisfaction in helping others. We have already mentioned that there are two approaches with regard to vocation. One is psychological approach and other is regulative approach. According to psychological approach, vocation is a spiritual and psychological journey that helps one in knowing oneself. Once this happens the person will be able to identify where he/she belongs. This is referred to as 'calling'. Palmer explains that the calling for a particular vocation comes from within. The person needs to identify the vocation with himself/herself. But the call to teach does not come from external encounters alone- no outward teacher or teaching will have much effect until my soul agrees to do the same. Any authentic call ultimately comes from the voice of the teacher within, the voice that invites me to honor the nature of my true self". (p.29).

Now let us explore Hansen's regulative approach. Regulative approach is about how a person views and interprets her/his profession. This approach says that vocation is not only about psychological origin, but also about social origin.

According to Hansen (1995), there is “social practice” in the society. Based on the existing social practice prevailing in the society, one learns, grows and chooses a profession/vocation. There are social contexts within which one works, learns and grows. This is called vocation. The following Indian example gives you more clarity.

Indian society considers teaching as a suitable vocation for women. Girls get the impression that teaching is the best option from young age onwards. Women in India are triply burdened. They need to take up productive, reproductive and societal roles. Women need to take care of many activities assigned to them. In this context, society considers teaching as a suitable vocation. According to the societal impression, teaching is a time bound activity. Society feels women can contribute in all three roles if they chose a feminine vocation like teaching. This practice is ingrained and inbuilt in the society. Accordingly, most of the women prefer to choose teaching as a vocation.

In the following paragraph we try to explain how to discover and choose one’s own vocation and how to view ‘teaching as a vocation’. Apart from giving their views on vocation, Palmer and Hansen also answer our queries regarding how to choose teaching as a vocation. In the psychological approach, teaching as a vocation is not only about acquiring outward qualities, but also about developing inbuilt qualities. These qualities are reading, listening, solitude and silence. One should explore oneself with the above mentioned qualities. Once we are used to it, it becomes a part of our habit. In this process, one can find her/his ‘calling’ for a particular vocation. Even if one chooses teaching as vocation in the beginning of her/his career, she/he will be able to discover his/her vocation of interest in the later stage. She/he may shift the vocation too. Then the next question is “Can we choose a vocation? Or is it an inbuilt quality”? This question is answered by both Palmer and Hansen. According to Palmer, qualities of teaching are inbuilt. But, Hansen says that one needs to choose a vocation consciously and pursue the same with choice of accomplishments and discover oneself in that. One has to gain knowledge and know the existing social practices to choose the vocation. One needs to cultivate real interest in teaching to keep the students attentive, if he/she chooses teaching as a profession. More than that, preparing students to become learned professionals and showing the path to discover their own vocation is challenging. The following stories explain further the concepts of Hansen and Palmer.

### **Story 1**

Mr. Hatch was a reserved person. He worked at a shoelace factory. He got a parcel with a sweet box from someone for the first time. He felt happy and celebrated the event with his neighbours. Few days later he realized that the sweet box was wrongly delivered to his address. Again he became a reserved person until his neighbours made him realize that everyone in the colony liked him.

### **Story 2**

Ms. Rumphus lived in a small house on the seashore. Her house was surrounded by lupine flowers. When she was a child, her grandfather advised her that when she grew up she must contribute to bring more beauty and happiness around her. After travelling to many places she finally settled near the seashore. First, she sowed the seeds of lupine flowers around her house. Later she spread

lupine seeds all around the village. It bloomed in the next season. The entire village became beautiful. She converted this into a vocation. She passed this on to the younger generation.

In the stories narrated above, Mr. Hatch chose a vocation based on his skill and settled in the shoelace factory. He never explored further. But in Ms. Rumphus' case, the calling was to make the world beautiful. She does so by sowing the seeds of a flowering plant. Ms. Rumphus' vocation was a life long process. Students who want to become teachers must realize that it is a life long process. At the age of 18, it is difficult to decide on a particular vocation. Someone may help the young minds to identify their vocation based on their interest or they may also instill some values in them to make a particular vocation a part of their life. When they move into life, they take the instilled values and must excel in the chosen field with interest.

Please take a short break and find answers to the following questions based on your reading.

**Check Your Progress 1**

1. Define Vocation.

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2. What is regulative approach?

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## 5.4 THE TEACHER AS A TRANSMITTER OF KNOWLEDGE

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Education serves a number of social purposes. The core activity of education is knowledge acquisition, acquiring capability of generating knowledge, applying the same for initiating qualitative changes in one's own attitude and behavior and acquiring skills for human resource development. Along with knowledge creation, it has to impart skills and values. Human development aims at ensuring overall wellbeing of the person. Education plays a significant role in human development. Educational indicators are part of measuring the phenomena of continuity and change in both qualitative and quantitative indicators in education. Teachers are the core persons in these activities. Teaching is a diverse and complex activity. It is multi-dimensional. Boys/girls learn and acquire knowledge culminating in overall personality development with skills of self reliance. There are various stages in these processes. Various teaching methods need to be adopted at each stage of human development to impart knowledge and skill. The methods and content may vary depending upon the development age of the learners. For example, the primary school teacher can use activity based teaching to impart knowledge and skill. The college teacher can use mixed

methods like lecturing, activity and multi media. Teaching consists of cognitive, affective and interpersonal elements. Teachers can draw and construct teaching methods and transmit knowledge by identifying significant points from these elements.

In this section we will concentrate only on knowledge base as we are going to deal with 'teacher as a transmitter of knowledge'. Teachers also have the responsibility to construct teaching behaviour among prospective teachers. Knowledge can be transmitted through various ways.

Unlike other professions, education not only creates knowledge base but is also a practicing profession. Teachers need to draw theories of learning and bodies of knowledge to generate student learning, understanding, and later helping them to apply it in their lives for addressing different challenges. Teachers are not only generating learning in others, they also learn while teaching. The field of education has two sets of knowledge base. For example, a Physics teacher or a Chemistry teacher or a Music teacher must have the domain knowledge along with pedagogical knowledge. A Physics teacher should not only know his/her subject, but he/she should also be able to clarify doubts relating to all basic sciences, so that children are able to acquire knowledge along with inculcation of scientific temper.

There are different approaches to categorizing knowledge base for teaching profession. First we will look at the knowledge of the discipline. Disciplines such as Psychology (Cognitive Psychology, Educational Psychology, and Psychometrics), Sociology, and History of education, Philosophy of education, Linguistics and Neuroscience have contributed concepts and discourses to educational discipline. Though these disciplines exist individually, they have direct/indirect relationship with education and application. For example, Educational Psychology and Philosophy of Education are derived from Psychology. These disciplines provide valuable insights to education, but they are independent as their focus and thrust varies. So we need to develop a common framework or theory for better understanding, knowledge production and common use.

Polanyi (1958) is a pioneer in distinguishing tacit and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is subjective, context-specific and communicated through demonstration. Explicit knowledge is objective and can be described in a systematic and propositional language. Nonaka and Takeuchi have explained the interaction of tacit and explicit knowledge by developing a model. In this model they developed four modes of knowledge and there is interaction and conversation among these four modes, which are socialization, externalization, combination and internalization. Socialization is a process where skills/tacit knowledge is transmitted by the skilled to the semi-skilled through demonstration / practice. Externalization is a process in which tacit knowledge is explained through explicit concepts. Combination is explaining concepts by developing detailed proposal including hypothesis and theory. Internalization is, making learnt knowledge into everyday tacit behaviour. Based on this, Hargreaves (1998) developed a model to explain knowledge transmission in schools. He compares knowledge creation with horticulture cropping. Knowledge creation is like sowing, germinating, thinning, pruning and displaying.

Gibbons et al (1994) explained the knowledge production from traditional knowledge production (mode 1) to intellectual enquiry (mode 2). They explained these by using Humanities and Technology disciplines. Mode 1 is traditional

knowledge. It involves basic concepts. These basic concepts and basic knowledge about a particular discipline will be framed as syllabus for colleges. With regards to Mode 2. It operates in research institutions. It adopts basic concepts and fundamentals in the particular subject and applies those concepts for addressing social problems and larger research areas. There is a clear demarcation between fundamental basic concepts of the discipline and applied knowledge. Both operate in separate ways.

According to Gibbons et. al, discipline of education needs to concentrate on knowledge production on educational issues by adopting and borrowing various concepts from different disciplines. Once we consider teachers as transmitters of knowledge we need to concentrate on pedagogy. Schulman coined the term ‘pedagogical content knowledge’. The mixture of pedagogy and content knowledge is unique for teaching profession. Turner Bisset is (1999) study proposes 11 sets of knowledge, which are substantive subject knowledge, syntactic subject knowledge, beliefs about the subject, curriculum knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of self and knowledge of educational ends, purpose and values. Another significant area that needs to be concentrated for knowledge transmission is research.

We have discussed knowledge base so far. How can knowledge base be transformed in the classroom and how does class room behaviour affect knowledge base? Unlike other professions, teachers need to have knowledge base about the subject, methodology of transaction, theoretical knowledge, and be well aware about the sources of information and professional competence. Teachers need to use their experiences and knowledge in the classrooms. Nonaka and Takeuchi explained the concept of internalization in which teachers interact with one or more learners to understand the learner and stimulate their learning. This happens only if the teacher has subject knowledge. Subject knowledge transforms teaching behavior. Along with subject knowledge, lesson planning and mapping learner’s expectation from the syllabus does contribute to better learning outcomes.



**Fig. 1: Insight to guide teaching moment**

Figure 1 discusses Lonergan's idea of insight. He talks about the nature of knowledge and rational self-consciousness. He discussed these concepts in the context of Mathematics and Physics. When people learn Physics and Mathematics, they relate these subjects in everyday life. According to him, they behave with common sense. Learners of sciences relate daily life application with scientific knowledge even though it lacks precision, replicability and generality. According to Lonergan, common sense means 'a habitual but incomplete set of insights that is completed with appropriate variations in each concrete set of circumstances that called for speech or action'. One needs to have insights and skill to select appropriate knowledge and ability to generate fresh insights. If we apply the same to teachers and class room behaviour, teachers possess vast knowledge in a subject. He/She needs to select appropriate knowledge and apply the same in the classroom.

Fig 1 comprises of subject knowledge, other knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, research, theory, skills and experience. All these types of knowledge give insights to the teachers. He/she cannot apply everything in all situations. But if the teacher has ability to apply all the above knowledge, he/she can use it according to the situation. For example, if learners have specific learning disability, the theories related to child development, cognitive development, socio economic situation of the learners, school environment, will certainly help teachers to improve the learning capacity of the learners. There are wide ranges of Information Communication Technology (ICT) materials available in teaching. Also there are technologically enabled classrooms. If the teacher knows about integrating knowledge with technology and adoption of child centered pedagogy, it will be helpful to enable learners to learn effectively. There are so many research findings related to cognitive development and interactive nature of learning.

The following case study will be helpful to know the unique teaching method to transmit knowledge at primary level.

**Box 1 Government of Tamil Nadu — Activity Based Learning (ABL )**

The key feature of the ABL method is that it uses child-friendly educational aids to foster self-learning and allows a child to study according to his or her aptitude and skill.

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)-supported ABL project was first undertaken by the Chennai Corporation in 13 schools in 2003. After considering the success, the project has been adopted by all the 270 primary schools in the district. It has transformed the way of teaching.

This initiative has caught the imagination of both teachers and students alike through innovative teaching methods and by actively involving the children in the learning process.

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Under the system, the curriculum is divided into small units, each group of Self-Learning Materials (SLM) comprising attractively designed study cards for English, Tamil, Maths, Science and Social Science. When a child finishes a group of cards, he completes one ‘milestone’. Activities in each milestone include games, rhymes, drawing, and songs to teach a letter or a word, to form a sentence, to do mathematics and science, or to understand a concept. The child takes up an Exam Card only after completing all the milestones in a subject. If a child is absent one day, he continues from where he left unlike in the old system where the child had to learn on his own what he missed out on.

**Adopted from UNICEF, India** <http://unicef.in/Story/603/Activity-based-learning-A-radical-change-in-Primary-Education>

The above example shows the recent development in ABL method and its impact on primary education. The practical experience gained by the teachers certainly strengthens their insights on cognitive knowledge and improves their teaching practice. There is one column called “other knowledge” in Figure 1. “Other knowledge” includes the socio-economic background, learner’s personal experience, location of school, learner’s habits, and the cultural background of the learners.

The above diagram may be expanded by adding experiences of teachers with appropriate research. Based on knowledge, experiences and situations, teaching may vary. So teachers must choose methods accordingly. The good teachers may not stick to the particular knowledge and pedagogy.

Please take a short break and try to find answers to the following questions based on your reading.

**Check Your Progress II**

3. Distinguish tacit and explicit knowledge.

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## 5.5 PLACE OF TEXT IN THE PEDAGOGICAL WORLD OF KNOWLEDGE

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A much more powerful role for the teacher is as a curriculum maker- one who designs a curriculum that grows out of the needs and interests of the students (Goodwin 2010, 25).

“Pedagogy is defined as the art or science of teaching; instructional methods. We discuss here the importance of pedagogy versus content knowledge and verbal ability. Content, theories, and methods of teaching become the building blocks for curriculum development; they are blended together, thoughtfully



integrated into coherent and meaningful learning experiences. When teachers are curriculum-makers, they can be responsive to the needs and interest of students, not just state mandates”.

The essence of teaching is to learn through the job training. According to Bolin and Goodwin, 1992 and Goodwin, 2010, there are five types of domain knowledge required for teaching.

They are

1. Personal Knowledge/autobiography and philosophy of teaching;
2. Contextual Knowledge/understanding learners, schools, and society;
3. Pedagogical knowledge/content, theories, teaching methods, and curriculum development;
4. Sociological knowledge/diversity, cultural relevance, and social justice and
5. Social knowledge/cooperative, democratic group process, and conflict resolution.

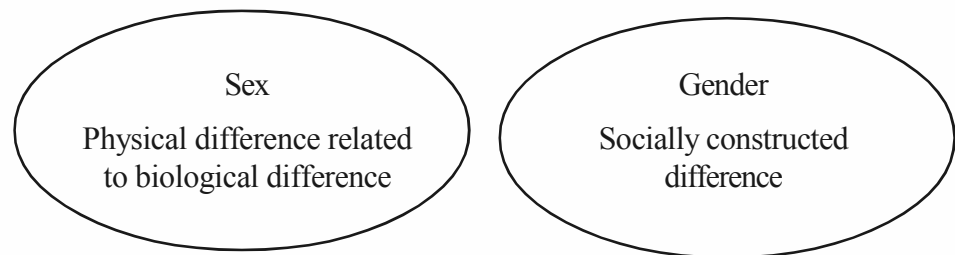
The personal knowledge includes deconstruction of existing experiences, myths, attitudes, assumptions, biases and the reconstruction of everything with a new understanding. The teachers must be open to ideas and must transform themselves in the process of teaching. With regard to gender, the existing myths about girls and boys, men and women have to be broken. The teacher needs to question his/her own biases and misconceptions for becoming an effective agent of social change.

### **Box 2 Innovative Pedagogy- State of Kerala Practices**

Kerala is the first State in India to be declared as a fully literate State. It has shown keen interest in improving school education by introducing social constructivist paradigm from traditional behaviorist way of teaching. This was mentioned in the National Curriculum Framework of NCERT in the year 2000 and Kerala introduced it in the year 2001. The transaction in the classroom and the evaluation methodology were changed. Instead of direct questions that could be answered only through memorizing the lessons, indirect questions and open ended questions were included so that the student needed to think before answering, and the answers could be subjective to some extent. This meant that the students had to digest what they studied and had to be able to use their knowledge in a specific situation to answer the questions. At the same time, the new method took away a lot of pressure and the children began to find examinations interesting and enjoyable instead of being stressful. A Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation (CCE) system was introduced along with this, which took into consideration the overall personality of the student and reduced the dependence on a single final examination for deciding promotion to the next class.

Adopted from <http://www.gnu.org/education/edu-system-india.en.html>

Gender is associated with traits and characteristics that are transmitted from one generation to another and they vary from culture to culture. What are these social traits? For example, society expects women to be slender, shy, sensitive, traditional, home bound, not to run or jump around, not to laugh loudly etc. At the same time, society expects men to be bold, strong, tough, confident, talk loudly, not to be shy, not to cry etc. In reality, women and men are not born with these traits/qualities. Family and society bring up female children and male children in such a way that they acquire these traits in the process of socialization.



Ref: Unit 1 Gender Analysis an Introduction MGS 003 Gender Analysis, MA (Gender and Development), IGNOU

**Activity 1**

*Choosing the sex of the baby:* Meet a few expecting mothers and their spouses. It would be desirable if they are expecting their first child. They should be asked “Do you want a male child or a female child? Give two reasons for your answer”.

List the answers on chart paper: two columns - male and female – should be made. The answers of the respondents should be written under the respective columns. The number of ‘male’ responses and ‘female’ responses should be counted. Each of the reasons given by the respondents for their choice should be analyzed.

For example, the typical responses could be as follows:

Girl Child	Boy Child
Takes care of parents	Takes forward family name
Listens to parents and others	Takes care of parents in old age
Can be nicely dressed up	Performs the last rites for parents .
‘Light of the family’	‘Heir of the family’

Ref: Unit 1 Gender Analysis an Introduction MGS 003 Gender Analysis, MA (Gender and Development), IGNOU

The above table shows certain reasons for expecting a boy or a girl child by the family and society. These reasons have to be analyzed. It has to be discussed

with prospective teachers to break the myth about gender differences in the society. These myths have to be deconstructed and gender equality and gender equity have to be reconstructed.

Contextual knowledge includes knowledge gained through research. In the context of recent developments, empirical as well as theoretical research adds more knowledge to the discipline.

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## **5.6 QUESTIONING AND CHALLENGING EXISTING CURRICULUM, ATTITUDES, SOCIAL PRACTICES AND BELIEFS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF GENDER**

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In this section, we will see how gender bias is depicted in text books and how gender bias prevails in all disciplines.

Goal 5 of the Education for All (EFA) Dakar Goals (2000) focuses on “Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.” At the same time the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3 clearly states that it aims to “Promote gender equality and empower women,” and its Target 4 is to: “Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.” One of the obstacles in achieving gender equality in education is gender bias in text books.

An article by Jon Ellis in 2002 about school textbooks in the state of West Bengal in India brings out the gender bias in text books. The text in the history and geography (Parts 1 and 2) text books published in 1992 and 1996, respectively, has visible gender bias. For example, Part 1 has 71 pictures of males (76 percent) and 22 of females (24 percent). Part 2 shows far more extreme gender bias than Part 1. It has 50 pictures of males (96 percent) and 2 of females (4 percent). Pictures in the text book also show women working in unorganized sectors rather than organized sectors. It illustrates men as receivers of government benefits. Men are shown receiving land titles rather than women. In reality, West Bengal has introduced land reforms and many women own land titles. The author concludes that the “gender bias against women found in the text and pictures of these books makes them unacceptable”. Firoz Bakht Ahmed (2006) looks at gender bias in text books at the national level in his article. According to his study, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) have been working to remove gender disparities especially to remove gender stereotypes and gender biases in the text books. The study concludes that “be it a book on science, social studies, mathematics, English or Hindi, women can be seen fetching water, working in kitchens or cleaning the room. Most of the lessons are male-centric.” The study also cites a survey by Friends of Education. In that survey, it noted that the average primary school textbook has 115-130 pages and carries 80-100 illustrations. Their study found that “over half of the illustrations depict (solely) men and boys...and only six percent show (solely) women and girls.” Analysis of the six mathematics books used in the primary classes showed that men dominate activities representing commercial, occupational and marketing situations, whereas no single woman is shown as

a shopkeeper, merchant, executive, engineer or seller. Ahmed's overall conclusion is that: "Despite the NCERT having developed a set of guidelines for the elimination of gender stereotyping in textual material and the same disseminated to the authors and publishers, not much has changed."

We all know the difference between sex and gender. Sex is the biological difference between men and women. Gender is the socially constructed difference between men and women. As far as teaching is concerned, we shall look into the existing studies on attitudes, social practices and beliefs from gender perspective. We have already seen gender bias in school text books. Apart from gender bias in text books, the existing studies clearly depict the disciplinary choices of male and female students. Female learners are least interested in disciplines like mechanical engineering, cardiology, physical and chemical sciences. This is evident as the proportion of women in science decreased from 33.3 per cent in 1950-51 to 28.8 per cent in 1980-81. This was the period when physical science was at a premium, especially physics and chemistry. Till eighties they were the first choice for male students and while competing with men, women were pushed out. It is also possible that science was not, in any case, the first preference for young women whose parents perceived marriage as a priority over higher education. Only an undergraduate degree of any kind helped in the marriage market by raising the social status (Chanana. K. 2011). A science degree required a longer investment of time and other resources, therefore was not desirable. The young women were also socialized to perceive higher education from that view point.

Number of studies have shown that women enrolment in Arts courses has increased many folds. The proportion of men enrolment, on the other hand, has decreased. In teacher education, another "feminine" discipline, the proportion of women has gone up. Once women enter higher education at the undergraduate level, they move on to the next two levels, namely, the graduate and research level. In other words, their transition from one level to another has increased which highlights their staying power. Their proportion is highest at the graduate level while their proportion in research programmes has declined. The University Grants Commission has been providing financial assistance to universities for undertaking well-defined projects for research in women's studies and also for the development of curriculum at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels and relevant extension activities. The Commission has also created positions of part-time research associateships for women candidates in science and humanities including social sciences and engineering and technology. Research projects related to the theme of women's studies are being approved. Also assistance was provided to many universities and colleges/university departments for setting up women's studies centres and cells. To pursue research and higher studies the government has come out with a number of programmes.

The extent of higher education is generally measured by enrolment ratio in higher education. Three alternative methods are used to estimate the extent of access to higher education namely Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) and Enrolment of Eligible students Ratio (EER). The GER measures the access level by taking the ratio of persons in all age groups enrolled in various programmes in total population in the age group of 18 to 23. The NER measures the level of enrolment for age-specific groups namely those who are between 18 and 23. While the EER measures the level of enrolment of those who have completed higher secondary level education.

**Table 1: Male female ratio in Higher Education**

		GER	NER	EER
	All India Survey on Higher Education 2014-15 (provisional)	Census 2011	NSS 2003	NSS 2003
Male	24.5	21.6	12.3	62.9
Female	22.7	18.9	8.7	54.1

**Source:** Census of India, National Sample Survey and All India Survey of Higher Education, 2014-15.

The access to higher education is also low for girls as compared with boys, the GER being 21.6 for male students and 18.9 for female students according to 2011 census. Gender disparity in enrolment ratio is mainly because of the obvious differences in rural areas. In urban regions, the gender differences are minimal. Significant male-female disparities also exist in the enrolment ratio for EER. In 2003-04, the EER is 62.9 per cent and 54.1 per cent for male and female students respectively, the female EER being lower by nine per cent. Unlike GER, the differences in the male and female EER are visible both in rural and urban areas. It needs to be recognized that although the enrolment ratio is generally lower for female students when compared to males, girls belonging to lower castes and some religious groups suffer more while getting access to higher education than others.

Another area that needs to be discussed and scrutinized is curriculum development. There is a need to develop a meaningful and comprehensive framework that would address the gender differences in the curriculum. With the increasing feminization of agriculture, education, science and technology, it is very important that curriculum should be engendered by introducing basic courses on gender concerns in all disciplines. For example, when new drugs or testing instruments are invented in medicine, it needs to address gender concerns. A male body is different from a female one. Both are different from a transgender body. So each instrument or drug needs to take into account the gender differences of human bodies. Gender-sensitive curriculum should be introduced from school onwards. Before that, since teachers are the instruments in delivering gender sensitive curriculum, the curriculum of teacher education has to address gender issues. In teaching, the preference of women as teachers in primary education is high. The existing notion is that women are soft and caring. So, they handle small children better than male primary education teachers. This notion needs to be reversed. There is no gender component with regard to caring of children. Secondly, books at school level address the role of men and women in the society. The pattern of roles addressed in school text is due to socialization process. The role reversal needs to be included in the school curriculum and should be given to the learners. Socially relevant courses, employability courses should be started in a comprehensive manner for all genders. The effort so far taken to improve the number of students getting higher education especially women, is not an end in itself. Civil society should also join hands with the government to advance women in higher education.

### Activity 2

Select any book of your choice and examine how experiences of women and men are portrayed in the book?

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## 5.7 TEACHING AS ACTIVISM- TRANSFORMING REALITY

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Before we start this section, what is the role of a teacher? Should the teacher promote critical thinking in students and make them active citizens who question existing social evils? Should the teacher inspire the students to be activists? Then what about the teacher? Should she/he be an activist too? Will such a teacher, while teaching gender issues, question the existing power relations? Firstly we shall explore teaching as activism.

There are so many theories related to gender, caste and class. When a teacher explains theories, ideas, concepts and research works related to the concepts, the obvious question that arises in a student's mind is – how do these theories work in the field? What type of changes have they created in the society? Take for example feminist theories. Feminist theories question existing power relations and challenges subordination of women. It also strives for the empowerment of women. Any individual effort or a collective effort that fights against oppression, exploitation, injustice, intimidation and violence against women and strives for gender equity, and gender justice can be referred to as feminism. There are various types of feminist ideologies like liberal, Marxist, socialist and radical. Each one has chosen different paths to attain equality for women. Students may experience gender bias in the society. When the teacher discusses feminist ideologies/theories in the class, students will think about challenging gender bias in the society. So the teacher plays the role of an activist here. Revolutionary educational philosophers always felt that freedom, liberation and equality are possible only if the teacher practices them. Liberal education means both the ideal (theory) and practice.

According to Paulo Freire “it was the intersection of Paulo's thought and the lived pedagogy of the teachers of my girlhood (most of them women) who saw themselves as having liberatory mission to educate us in a manner that would prepare us effectively resist racism and white supremacy, that has had a profound impact on my thinking about the art and practice of teaching”. (1994, 52).

Secondly, the socio-political identity that the teacher experiences from childhood will have a profound impact on him/her. It is important for the teachers to maintain integrity and consciously bring out the hopes and aspirations among students. The value the teacher carries should be separated from the values he/she shows in the classroom. There are various types of political activism that is involved in teaching namely, conservative, liberal, assimilationist and radical. When a teacher trains the students to think critically, they acquire important values and become democratic, humanistic, open-minded and gender just. These are the qualities of activism. So a teacher is capable of making the whole class of student activists. The emergence of critical mass of students in the classroom may bring some transformation in the society. We have discussed theory and practice using feminist theories as examples. We can elaborate further by considering the life of Socrates. Socrates took his philosophy to the streets and fought for justice using his philosophy. His ideas are not abstract. They are concrete ideals for the community. Western philosophy starts from Socrates' ideas.

Differences persist in a society due to caste, culture, gender and class. Due to the globalized economy there is a lot of migration from rural areas to urban

areas and there are interstate, intrastate and inter-continental migrations too. As an activist, the teacher's way of living, that is, fighting for justice and freedom will certainly have a profound impact on students. Real activism is not only teaching and writing about ideas but practicing those ideas and struggling to make them a reality.

For feminists "the ultimate test of knowledge is not whether it is 'true' according to an abstract criterion, but whether or not it leads to progressive change". Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Nation says "We must be the change we wish to see". The teacher, who is an activist, follows the same.

To bring a positive change in the world, the teacher needs to teach reality to students. Unless students experience the real world, it is not possible for them to connect learnt theories. Overall the activist teacher needs to maintain integrity in both personal as well as professional front. Consciously bridging personal and professional identity is significant. For example, being a feminist should reflect in his/her profession too. The teacher should deconstruct existing gender roles and bring about a reversal of roles. Feminist activist teachers look at society through the concepts of equality and fraternity. The development of the idea of teacher/activist is constructed by seeing teaching as a vocation/calling, rather than profession. According to Schwarz, teaching as vocation means, there is a need to bring a lot of reform in the vocation. For bringing reform, teaching itself must be humane and have personal and ethical concerns.

Secondly, developing course content with more real life experiences than mere theoretical knowledge is the need of the hour. For example, Philosophy has abstract concepts. Introducing real life experiences in the curriculum opens the students' minds and makes them understand the world practically instead of having abstract thoughts about it.

Please take a short break and try to find answers to the following questions based on your reading

### Check Your Progress III

4. What is Gross Enrollment Ratio?

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## 5.8 LET US SUM UP

The unit started with identifying whether teaching is a 'vocation' or a 'calling.' We defined 'vocation' and 'calling' and discussed the difference between the two through stories. The next section was about knowledge, knowledge generation and transmission. Teachers are considered to be transmitters of knowledge. Then, the role of the text in pedagogical situation was discussed. There is gender discrimination in teaching profession too. Here we discussed why and how a few disciplines are considered masculine and a few as feminine. Along with that we used GER to show women's low enrollment in higher education. Gender discrimination begins from the texts of primary school itself. Teachers are instrumental in bringing gender awareness in learners. This is like

a cycle. First teachers' needs to be gender sensitized. Then, gender-sensitive teachers will bring up gender-sensitive learners. The final section talked about teaching and activism.

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## 5.9 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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1. 'Teacher as Transmitter of knowledge'- Do you agree with the statement? Examine.
2. Discuss the prevalence of gender differences in curriculum and elaborate on women's status in higher education.

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## 5.10 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Frederick Buechner's (1973) defined vocation as "the place where your deep gladness and world's deep hunger meets". According to Hansen "Vocation is a work that results in service to others and personal satisfaction in the rendering of that service".
2. Regulative approach is about how she/he views and interprets her/his teaching. Teachers adopt vocational posture as if he/she thinks as acting and positioning himself/herself in a place. From that position one grows. This approach says that vocation is not only of a psychological origin, it is of a social origin too.
3. Polanyi (1958) is pioneer in distinguishing tacit and explicit Knowledge. Tacit knowledge is subjective, context specific and communicated through demonstration. Explicit knowledge is objective, can be described in systematic and propositional language.
4. The GER measure the access level by taking the ratio of persons in all age groups enrolled in various programmes to total population in the age group of 18 to 23.

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