

## Lesson 8

# Chandrabhabha Saikiani



*Do you know what rules society had for women a hundred years ago?*

*Work with a friend. List at least five rules women in the early 20th century had to follow, that modern women do not need to.*

*What will you do if you are asked to speak with boys from behind a bamboo screen?*

*Now read this story about a passionate Assamese woman who tried to remove the taboos faced by herself and other women of her days.*

Chandrabhabha Saikiani was a renowned social reformer from Assam who fought to make formal education available for girls. These happened during a time when society did not allow girls to step out of home. Born on 16 March 1901 to Ratiram Mazumdar and Gangapriya, Chandrabhabha spent her early years in Doisingari village in Kamrup district. She and her sister Rajaniprabha were so eager to study that they did not mind wading through mud to attend a school which only had boys and was situated several kilometers away. This was the beginning of a journey of a lifetime to rid society of all the taboos against women that prevailed during those days.



Chandrabhabha Saikiani realised that girls had to fight a hard battle to receive an education as good as that received by boys. So after school, she would gather other girls and teach them what she had learnt during the day.

Chandrabhabha's efforts greatly impressed school sub inspector Nilkanta Barua, and she and her sister were awarded a scholarship to study in Nagaon Mission

School. Chandraprabha made the best of her school education. On several occasions she fought for the rights of girls. In those days girls weren't admitted into the hostel unless they converted to Christianity. Chandraprabha vehemently opposed this and the school authorities were compelled to allow girls of all religions to avail the hostel facilities.

In 1925, Chandraprabha challenged the prevailing custom of women sitting behind a bamboo screen in public meetings. In the Assam Sahitya Sabha session held that year at Nagaon, she delivered a very powerful speech and demanded the removal of the bamboo screen that was placed between men and women. She was staunchly against such restrictions and her protest against these norms of society was not confined to this incident alone. The next year, at her initiative, the first women's organisation, "*Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samiti*" was formed.

Chandraprabha Saikiani was greatly affected by the deep rooted caste system in India. In her own state, Assam, she took matters into her own hands. One of such radical steps was to fight for the entry of every one, irrespective of caste, gender and class, into the famous Hayagriva Madhava temple at Hajo.

In 1921, when Chandraprabha met Mahatma Gandhi, she was inspired to join the freedom movement. She spread the message of khadi, boycott of foreign clothes, removal of untouchability, banning of opium and other social evils. From 1930 onwards she immersed herself in the freedom movement. She was imprisoned thrice, in 1931, 1942 and in 1943. Nothing could dampen her indomitable patriotic spirit. Whenever she saw any injustice, her rebellious spirit rose to the occasion.

This great freedom fighter spread the message of her mission also through a number of books. The Padma Shri was conferred upon her a few days after her death in 1972. Apart from this great honour, she was also remembered with a commemorative postal stamp in 2002.

## ACTIVITIES

**1. Answer the following questions from the lesson to check your comprehension:**

- (a) Who was Chandrababha Saikiani?
- (b) What did Chandrababha do to educate the girls of her village?
- (c) Which two incidents show us how Chandrababha fought for the rights of girls?
- (d) On what occasion did Chandrababha Saikiani inspire women to come out from behind the bamboo screen?
- (e) What steps did Chandrababha take to eliminate the caste system?
- (f) What was Chandrababha Saikiani's role in the freedom movement of India?

**2. Work in pairs and complete the following sentences with information from the lesson:**

- (a) At a time when society did not allow young girls to step out of home, she fought \_\_\_\_\_.
- (b) In those days girls' schools did not exist, so Chandrababha \_\_\_\_\_.
- (c) Chandrababha and her sister were awarded \_\_\_\_\_.
- (d) In order to eliminate the evils of the caste system, Chandrababha fought for the entry of \_\_\_\_\_.
- (e) Being inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, Chandrababha \_\_\_\_\_.

**3. Read the following sentences and find a word from the text to replace the underlined part.**

- (a) Chandraprabha Saikiani was a famous and respected social worker from Assam.
- (b) She tried to get rid of all the cultural or religious restrictions against women that prevailed during those days.
- (c) Chandraprabha refused to accept and questioned the prevailing custom of women sitting behind bamboo screens in public meetings.
- (d) She was strong in her attitude against society's restriction and her protest against the norms of society was not confined to a particular incident.
- (e) Whenever she saw any injustice, her desire to resist authority rose to the occasion.

**4. Listen to your teacher read out the first paragraph of the lesson. As you listen, complete the table below with information about Chandraprabha Saikiani:**

Chandraprabha Saikiani	A _____ social reformer from A _____
Birth	_____ March _____
Father	_____
Mother	_____
Sister	_____
School	A school which only had _____

**5. There are seven paragraphs in the lesson Chandraprabha Saikiani. Choose the appropriate description for each paragraph.**

**(a) The first paragraph is about:**

- (i) Chandraprabha Saikiani's childhood
- (ii) Chandraprabha Saikiani's birth as the social reformer
- (iii) Chandraprabha Saikiani's career as a school teacher

**(b) The second paragraph is about:**

- (i) Chandraprabha Saikiani's preparation to be a school teacher
- (ii) Girl's education vs boy's education
- (iii) Chandraprabha Saikiani's efforts to get an education just like the boys of her village

**(c) The third paragraph is about:**

- (i) her fight for freedom
- (ii) her fight for the rights of girls
- (iii) her fight against British rule

**(d) The fourth paragraph is about:**

- (i) formation of *Assam Pradeshik Mahila Samiti*
- (ii) Chandraprabha Saikiani's protest against restrictions imposed on women
- (iii) Chandraprabha Saikiani's speech at the Assam Sahitya Sabha meeting

**(e) The fifth paragraph is about:**

- (i) the caste system of India
- (ii) Chandraprabha Saikiani's visit to Hajo
- (iii) Chandraprabha Saikiani's protest against the caste system

**(f) The sixth paragraph is about:**

- (i) Chandraprabha Saikiani's meeting with Mahatma Gandhi
- (ii) Chandraprabha Saikiani as the freedom fighter
- (iii) the punishment Chandraprabha Saikiani received for being a freedom fighter

**(g) The seventh paragraph is about:**

- (i) Chandrababha Saikiani's rebellious spirit
- (ii) Chandrababha Saikiani's imprisonment
- (iii) Chandrababha Saikiani's motivation to join the freedom movement

**6. Discuss in groups and share what you have learnt about:**

- (a) The condition of women during the days of Chandrababha Saikiani
- (b) Chandrababha Saikiani's role in the freedom movement

**Your group leader will read your points aloud for the rest of the class.**

**7. Let's learn some grammar:**

**In this lesson you have come across verbs that use 'to' before them-**

- (a) She was inspired to join the freedom movement.

The form "to join" is a non-finite verb generally known as the **to-infinitive**.

**The to-infinitive can also be used as the subject of a sentence as in-**

- (b) To keep the guests waiting is not good.

**It can also be used as the complement of a sentence-**

- (c) It is not good to keep the guest waiting.

**Now practise using the to-infinitive.**

**Combine these sentences by using to-infinitives. The first one is done for you-**

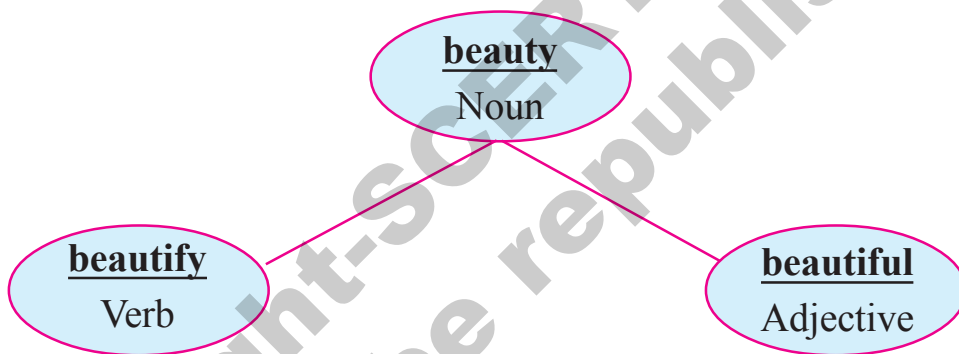
- (a) I will visit the book fair. I will buy a few novels.

I will visit the book fair to buy a few novels.

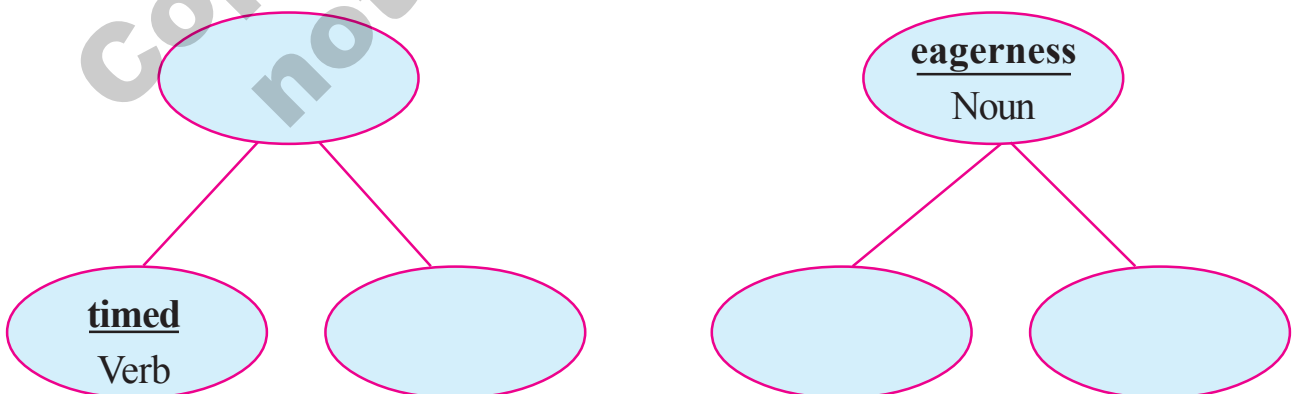
- (b) We are going to Puri tomorrow. We will visit the Jagannath Temple there.

- (c) She started a small school for girls. She would help them to overcome the taboos against women.
- (d) She delivered a very powerful speech. She demanded the removal of the prevailing customs of women sitting behind bamboo screens.
- (e) She and her sister were awarded a scholarship. They will study in Nagaon Mission School.

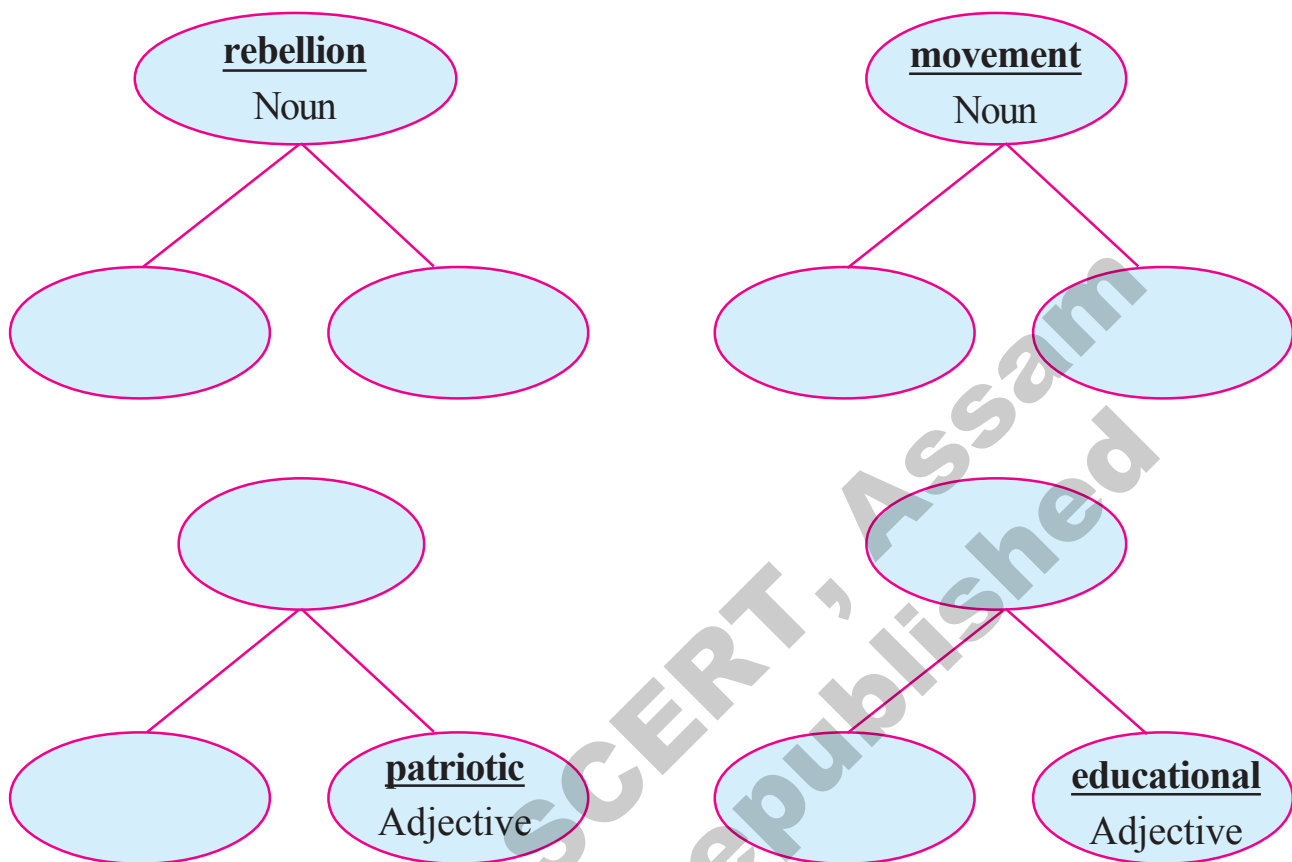
8. You must have come across English words which have different forms. One word can be used to form several other words, and such words usually go to a different word class. For example, look at the following word web where you will see different forms of the word beauty.



Now complete the word webs with other forms of the words given in each web below:







9. (a) Have you heard of CEDAW? The full form of CEDAW is the **Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women**. CEDAW is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the **United Nations General Assembly**. Described as an internal bill of rights for women, CEDAW was ratified by 189 countries. Some of the important features of CEDAW are:

- Governments shall take concrete steps to eliminate discrimination against women.
- Governments shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that women can enjoy basic human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- Governments shall take appropriate measures to eliminate sexist stereotypes.
- Women will have the right of vote, to participate in forming and implementing governmental policies.



- Women will have the right to represent the country at an international level.
- Women and girls should receive career and vocational guidance and have access to education opportunities at par with men or boys.

**Look how things have changed since the days of Chandrabhabha Saikiani! Today governments themselves have undertaken the task of eliminating discrimination against women. But the government alone cannot succeed in this task unless women become aware of their rights.**

- Work in small groups to find out more about CEDAW on the internet and write down some more important features of CEDAW. (You can search [www.un.org](http://www.un.org).)
- Based on your reading, prepare a poster on the topic - 'Let's stop discrimination against women'.



**(b) Now that you have learnt about Chandrabhabha Saikiani and the norms of society women had to follow, choose any one of the topics below and write a short essay. You can work in small groups.**

- Chandrabhabha Saikiani as a social reformer
- The different challenges that women faced during the time of Chandrabhabha Saikiani
- Chandrabhabha Saikiani fought a hard battle for herself and her younger sister in order to receive an education as good as the one the boys in her village were receiving.

- (c) Think of yourself in the place of Chandraprabha Saikiani and list some ideas to eradicate taboos against women that are still present in our society today.

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10. Your teacher will divide the class into five groups (A, B, C, D and E) and assign paragraphs to each group.

Group A - Paragraph 1, Group B - Paragraph 2, Group C - Paragraph 3, Group D - Paragraph 4, Group E - Paragraph 5. Working in groups:

- (a) Look up the dictionary to find out the meaning of the word 'skit'.
- (b) Read the given paragraph very carefully. Using the information provided in it, write out dialogues to make a skit. Develop the characters and also try to design the backdrop. Then act out the skit in front of the class.
- (c) Prepare a slogan on the issue highlighted in the paragraph. Write the slogans on chart paper and hang them around the class. Here is a sample slogan.

**Happy Women, Healthy Women!**  
**Stop Female Foeticide!**

## For the Teacher

Based on the biography of an Indian social reformer, writer and freedom fighter from Assam, this lesson tells us about Chandrabhabha Saikiani's journey of life.

Similar to all other lessons, Activities 1 to 5 are designed to test learners' comprehension of the lesson. You can initiate an oral discussion of the answers before learners write them.

Divide learners into groups and initiate a discussion about what learners have learnt about the two issues mentioned in Activity 6. This activity will not only enhance learners' understanding of the lesson but will also develop their speaking skills. Ask the group leader to read out their points aloud to the rest of the class.

'Let's learn some grammar' in Activity 7 is an exercise that will help learners understand and practise the use of the **to-infinitive**. They will learn other uses of the preposition 'to' through this activity.

Activity 8 is an interesting word building activity. It will help learners to work with words which can be used to form other words or go to a different word class. Completing the word web on their own will help them develop their word range.

The discussion on CEDAW is meant to create an awareness in girls about their rights. Activity 9 will help learners to find out more about CEDAW on the internet and prepare a poster on the topic 'Let's stop discrimination against women'. Discuss with learners the changes that have taken place since the days of Chandrabhabha Saikiani. Create an awareness that good will of government alone cannot succeed in elimination of discrimination against women. Help students to search more about CEDAW on the internet and write some of its important features. Ask learners to prepare a poster on the topic – 'Let's stop discrimination against women.' The writing skills of learners will be enhanced as they complete Activity 9 (b). Encourage them to note their points before they write an essay on the chosen topic in 9 (c). This activity can also be done as a group activity.

For Activity 10, divide the class into five groups (A, B, C, D and E) and assign paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively to each group. Help each group to prepare a skit

based on the paragraphs and ask them to enact it in front of the class. The same groups will prepare a slogan based on the paragraph assigned to them and write it on chart paper. Remember to hang the charts on the classroom wall.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

#### **The learner:**

- responds to instructions and announcements in school and public places viz. railway station, market, airport, cinema hall and act accordingly
- speaks about objects/events in the class/school environment and outside surroundings
- participates in different events such as role play, poetry recitation, skit, drama, debate, speech, elocution, declamation, quiz, etc., organized by school and other such organizations
- reads textual/non-textual materials in English/Braille with comprehension
- identifies details, characters, main idea and sequence of ideas and events while reading
- reads, compares, contrasts, thinks critically and relates ideas to life
- infers the meaning of unfamiliar words by reading them in context
- refers dictionary, thesaurus and encyclopedia as reference books for meaning and spelling while reading and writing
- prepares a write up after seeking information in print/online, notice board, newspaper, etc.
- communicates accurately using appropriate grammatical forms (e.g., clauses, comparison of adjectives, time and tense, active voice, passive voice, reported speech, etc.)
- writes e-mail, messages, notice, formal letters, descriptions/narratives, personal diary, report, short personal/biographical experiences, etc.

## Passages for Listening

### Lesson 2, Activity 8 (a) (i)

I met the American tourist, Jim Gordon, at the Park Hotel in Kolkata. We introduced ourselves. He was delighted to know that I was from Assam and owned a travel agency named Garuda Travels. Jim had heard of Kaziranga and its world famous one-horned rhinoceros. He was keen to visit it. He also wanted to visit the largest river island in the world, Majuli. Jim asked me what other places he should visit in Assam. I told him there were places of historical interest, wildlife sanctuaries, tourist spots and tea plantations that he could visit. Since it was mid-January, he was just in time to see the Magh Bihu, one of the major festivals of Assam, which celebrates the year's harvests with much fun and feasting. It was also the time when the Jonbeel Mela, a three-day community fair held by the indigenous Tiwa community, was held in Dayang Belguri at Jonbeel, Morigaon.

### Lesson 3, Activity 4

Due to incessant rains in Assam since Monday last, the quiz programme that was scheduled to be held this afternoon has been postponed indefinitely. The participants from other districts as well as the quizmaster were unable to travel to the venue. The next date of the quiz will be notified shortly. Students are requested to continue with their regular classes.





## READ FOR PLEASURE

This section in the textbook titled **Read For Pleasure** aims at providing students with stories, poems, biographies, etc. which they will read for information and pleasure. It is hoped that such efforts towards reading for pleasure will encourage students to read similar passages on their own which will contribute towards development of their reading skills.



## The Wooden Horse

*Here is the story about how the Greeks defeated the Trojans in a ten year long war by tricking them with a wooden horse. The story is from Homer's immortal epic named **The Iliad**.*

For ten long years the Greeks besieged the city of Troy without any success. The city was surrounded by tall walls and the gates were very strong. The Greeks found it difficult either to scale the walls or to break through the gates. Defeating Troy seemed to be an impossible task for them.

Then one morning, the citizens of Troy woke up to discover that the Greek ships were sailing away. "Could they be tired of the war?" one citizen said. It was a relief for the Trojans to see the Greek fleet of ships sailing away.

Suddenly one of the Trojans noticed something outside the city gate. It was a huge wooden horse mounted on a platform with wheels. The person, who was left behind by the Greeks, told them that it was an offering to the goddess Athena and it would make Troy unconquerable.

The Trojan soldiers examined the wooden horse. They were delighted.

Then the commander of the Trojan forces met the prince and said, "I suggest we drag the horse in."

The Trojans were happy that at last the war had come to an end. They brought the horse to the city and held a grand feast to celebrate their victory.

The feasting being over, the Trojans went to sleep. The whole of Troy lay in deep, peaceful sleep. Slowly a trap-door in the wooden horse slid open. A group of Greek soldiers hiding inside the belly of the wooden horse came out one by one.

They tip-toed to the city gates and opened them. The Greeks, who had only pretended to sail away, returned under cover of darkness. Once the gates were unlocked, the Greek soldiers swept in. They killed the Trojans in large numbers and set the city on fire. Troy was destroyed.



## Two Drops of Pulse Polio

It was a market day at Hajadisa, a small village in the district of North Cachar Hills of Assam. Villagers belonging to numerous tribes of the district had assembled in the market place, and they were busy in bargaining, buying and chatting with friends and acquaintances.

The market place was full of buyers and sellers right from the early morning. At 11 a.m., a mobile medical van belonging to the State Dispensary of Maibang stopped near the market place. Two doctors, three nurses and two attendants were sitting in the van. It was quite a big van, which resembled a bus. “Attention please, friends,” cried a voice from the van. “We are here to administer polio drops to the children aged five years or below. Hope you have heard of the pulse polio immunization programme. Two drops of pulse polio will save your child from a deadly disease. Please bring your children to us, we will administer the dose free.”

Sunil Nunisa and his wife Mala had come to the market with their three year old baby. The cute baby was sleeping on its mother’s back. Sunil was a farmer and Mala was a teacher of a primary school in a small village near Hajadisa. Sunil did not like modern medical treatment. He strongly believed that modern medicine was harmful. He always preferred a quack to a doctor. Mala, on the other hand, was in favour of modern medical health care.

“Hey, have you listened to the announcement?” Mala said to Sunil. “Come, let’s go to the doctors who have come from Maibang,” she said eagerly. “Going to the doctors? What for?” shouted Sunil. Mala looked at her husband and said quietly, “Our baby needs polio drops. You may not like modern medicine, but our daughter needs it. Polio is dangerous, you know.”

“Mala, I’m afraid I can’t agree with you. Two drops will prevent a disease! How ridiculous!” Sunil said gravely. His remark was full of disbelief and contempt.

“Sorry, I can’t agree with you on this point,” Mala replied.

“But I do believe in our age-old village medicine. Modern medicines have many side effects,” Sunil said emphatically.

Mala knew that her husband did not like doctors and medicines.

“Well, I agree with you partly,” Mala said to her husband. “But Polio drops have no side effects.”

“Well, Mala, there’s no point in quarrelling with you in the market place. Come, let’s go to the doctors and find out how the drops are administered.”

“That’s a very good idea!” Mala said happily. She was very pleased with her husband.

A crowd had already gathered near the mobile medical van. Mala and Sunil met one of their neighbours. “Hello, Dina, have you brought your child for the polio drops?” Mala asked her neighbour. “O yes, I knew that the doctors would come with polio drops,” Dina replied.

“Look,” Mala said to Sunil, Why can’t our child get polio drops when all these children are getting it?”

Sunil was not ready to accept Mala’s argument, but he did not want to make her angry and said, “Well, I do accept your point to some extent, but I can’t do anything blindly.”

“Who asks you to do anything blindly?” Mala said to Sunil. “Don’t you think that we should think for the safety of our little baby? Don’t you think polio is dangerous?”

“Well, Mala, what you say is quite right, but we should be careful. Many children suffer due to wrong medical treatment, you know,” Sunil remarked forcefully.

“I do accept your remarks to a point, but I’m afraid you are still biased. We should not deprive our baby of the medical facility that has been provided. These doctors have come all the way from Maibang to save our children. Come, let’s ask them to administer pulse polio drops to our little baby.”

Sunil looked around. The doctors were busy in administering the polio drops and there was a heavy rush towards the medical van. Sunil looked at his wife who was already in the queue. “OK! I’m joining you in the queue.” Saying so, he followed her slowly.

## The Second Voyage of Sindbad

This is the adventure story of a sailor named Sindbad, who lived in Baghdad during the rule of Caliph Harunal Rashid. Sindbad made seven voyages and every time he was just lucky to come back alive. This story relates to his second voyage as narrated by Sindbad himself.



After my first voyage, I was enjoying a life of peace and luxury. One day it occurred to me that I could as well travel around the world and make money by trading. Soon after, I bought goods and boarded a ship for my voyage. I thought it would be great fun to visit some distant lands.

One day we arrived on a beautiful island. It was covered in lush green vegetation. There were streams of clear water, trees bearing delicious fruit and sweet-smelling flowers of many colours. I walked up to a stream and sat under the shade of a fragrant tree. I ate some fruit, drank some water and soon fell asleep.

When I woke up the ship had already sailed away, leaving me behind all alone in the island. I ran to the shore. I was mad with grief. Desperately, I climbed up a tree and looked around. A little further away, I could see a white dome-like object beside a rock. I wondered what it could be. I went closer and discovered that it was a large

egg. It was the egg of a huge bird. At the next moment I saw a bird gliding down. The bird sat on the egg covering it with her wings and dozed off. It was the bird called roc, about which I had heard before. I moved forward quietly. I tied myself to one of its legs hoping it would take me away to a safer place. Early next morning the roc spread her wings and flew into the blue sky carrying me away. The bird landed in a deep valley that was full of diamonds and precious stones. The valley was full of huge serpents that were longer than palm trees. The roc picked up a serpent in its beak and flew away just a moment after I had untied myself from her leg.

I hid myself in a cave for fear of the deadly looking serpents. I was sure that I would never be able to get out of the valley of diamonds. Coming out of my cave, I suddenly noticed a big chunk of meat fall just near me. Someone was throwing the meat from the top of the mountain. The diamonds and precious stones stuck to the meat. Presently a huge eagle swooped down, clutched the meat in its talon and flew up to the mountain top.

I understood that diamond merchants used this strange device to collect diamonds. They threw pieces of meat down into the valley. The diamonds and precious stones got stuck to the meat which the eagles carried away to the mountains. The merchants collected the diamonds from the mountain. Just then an idea came into my mind: why not I tie myself to a chunk of meat?

I tied myself to a chunk of meat. The next moment I found myself being carried away swiftly along with the chunk of meat by an eagle to the top of the mountain. There I hurriedly untied myself from the chunk and stood up. The merchant whom I met there, was astonished to see me. "Who are you?" he asked. "How did you happen to come here?"

I told my story. He listened to me with wonder and said, "It's very interesting. I suggest you stay as my guest in my house. How about joining me in my business? It would be wonderful to have you for a business partner."

I had no interest in being his partner. Nevertheless, I stayed as his guest for several days. Then I set off for Baghdad and my second voyage came to an end.

## Albert Schweitzer

Albert Schweitzer was a German doctor who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952. He was born into a family which was known for their devotion to religion, education and music. Both his grandfathers played the organ and Schweitzer himself was a great organist. His musical career started with his early piano and organ lessons. He was a great performer too.

Albert Schweitzer was chiefly interested in studies of religion and music. One morning as he looked outside his window at the beautiful summer day, he had a strange feeling. He felt he had no right to be happy when there were so many unhappy people in the world. That day he decided that he would spend his life helping the poor and the needy.

One day Schweitzer read an article on the tribal people of the Congo region in Central Africa. These people were very ill because they did not have enough food to eat, and there was no doctor for hundreds of miles around. That day Schweitzer decided to become a doctor and work for those suffering Africans. He then went to study medicine at the university for five years. After becoming a doctor, he married Helene Bresslau. In 1913, Schweitzer and his wife took a ship to Africa.

The moment Schweitzer and his wife reached Lambarene, they found a crowd of people, who were very ill, waiting for them. Most of these people had travelled for hundreds of miles, hoping that the doctor would do some magic to cure them. But there was a problem. The tribals did not understand German, nor did the doctor and his wife know the African languages spoken by these people.

In spite of very hot weather, mosquitoes and other insects, Schweitzer with his wife stayed in a village called Lambarene and served the poor Africans all their lives. They lived among the ill and the suffering tribals without complaining about the heat, the discomfort, and the unfamiliar food or customs of the Africans. They worked with kindness, love and patience, without expecting anything in return.



Luckily, among the tribals there was a man named Joseph who knew French, and could work. Joseph could speak eight languages, and even though he could not read or write French, he never made a mistake in helping Dr. Schweitzer give medicines to the patients.

Doctor Schweitzer did not know any magic but throughout the Congo basin in Central Africa, Schweitzer came to be known as ‘Oganda’- the doctor who could do magic- because he cured so many of the sick people. In 1914 the First World War broke out in Europe, and the French government put Schweitzer and his wife under house arrest because they were German.

Well, after four years, the Schweitzers were allowed to travel back to their native village, Gunsbach. Instead of being angry, the doctor waited patiently for six years, and in 1942 he went back to Africa. This time his wife stayed back, but another doctor went with him. But when they reached Lambarene, Schweitzer found that his hospital and all the other buildings had turned into a wild place, being covered by dense African jungle.

Once again Schweitzer lost no time, and began his work slowly clearing out the forest. Every morning he would examine patients, and in the afternoons he would rebuild the hospital buildings.

By 1947 Lambarene had become a large hospital. There were 350 beds and a team of trained doctors and nurses. Schweitzer led them all, but he was especially interested in helping patients suffering from leprosy. At that time leprosy was a feared disease, and lepers were treated badly by other people. Instead of ignoring them, Schweitzer made a special hospital for such patients and served them himself.

Although Schweitzer was busy with his patients in his hospital for the people of Africa he continued his music. In fact, Dr. Schweitzer was famous all over the world as a great organ player. His books on music and religion are known well all over the world.

For his noble spirit, his simple life, and his never-ending eagerness to help the poor and the needy, Dr. Schweitzer won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1952. You see, he could have lived a happy and comfortable life in Germany, but he chose to work for the ill and the suffering Africans, even though he knew that it would be a hard life.

### The Village Child

My home is a house  
Near a wood  
I'd live in a street  
If I could!  
I do wish someone  
Lived near.

There's no one to play with  
At all.

The trees are so high  
And so tall:  
And I should be lonely  
For hours  
Were it not for the birds  
And the flowers.

### The City Child

I live in a city  
In a street;  
It is crowded with traffic  
And feet;  
There are buses and motors  
And trams.  
I wish there were meadows  
And lambs.  
The houses all wait  
In a row  
There is smoke everywhere  
That I go.  
I don't like the noises  
I hear  
I wish there were woods  
very near.



## The Three Runners

In the days when white people ruled South Africa and apartheid was the law of the land, two middle-aged blacks met in a section of Johannesburg where only Whites were allowed. One of them had a permit to work in the area, the other did not. This meant he could be put behind bars for trespassing into an exclusive zone.

Suddenly they saw a policeman coming towards them, and froze. "Run!" whispered the man with the permit to his friend. "I'll follow."

They started running and the policeman shouting "Stop, stop," began chasing them. Finally, he caught the second man.

"Did you think you could outrun me!" he snarled. "Show me your permit!"

The man, playing for time, began fumbling in his pocket and finally produced his permit.

The policeman was taken aback. He realized that he had been tricked. The man without the permit was now too far away to be caught.

"When you had a permit why did you run!" he bawled.

"Doctor's orders," said the man. "He has asked me to run a mile every evening."

"Oh, yes?" sneered the policeman. "Then why was your friend running?"

"His doctor too has ordered him to run," said the man.

The policeman became red with anger.

"You think you're very smart, don't you?" he snarled. "But tell me, if you were only running for your health why didn't you stop when you saw me running after you? And don't tell me you didn't see me chasing you... I know you did!"

"Of course I knew you were running after me!" said the man.

"Then why didn't you stop?" asked the policeman, triumphantly.

"It was stupid of me," said the man, "but I thought you too had been ordered to run by your doctor."

## The Spider and the Fly

“Will you walk into my parlour?”  
said the spider to the fly;  
“ ’Tis the prettiest little parlour  
that ever you did spy.

The way into my parlour  
is up a winding stair,  
And I have many curious things  
to show when you are there.”

“Oh no, no,” said the little fly;  
“To ask me is in vain.  
For who goes up your winding stair  
Can ne’er come down again.”



## On Happiness

The word 'happy' is very interesting. We use it to wish somebody a "Happy New Year" or "Happy Birthday". The birth of a child is euphemistically referred to as a happy event. We cheer up a friend with "Don't worry, be happy". Yet all the time, we wonder what happiness is and how it can be achieved. A standard dictionary would define happiness as a state of being happy. On the contrary 'happy' is defined as a feeling of pleasure and contentment.

Many of us tend to believe that the early years of life are the happiest stage of a person's life. However, it may interest you to know that happiness does not depend upon age. Indeed, no particular stage of life is less happy than another. Old age can be as happy as middle age or for that matter, the tumultuous teenage years. This fact was borne out by worldwide survey of about 170,000 people conducted in 1980 in the University of Michigan as reported by Jeremy Daniel.

Another myth that the study explodes is that wealth has a correlation with happiness. The finding is that wealth does not beget happiness. Although individual buying power had more than doubled in the last few decades, the study found that affluent individuals were no happier because of their wealth. In another survey, it was found that the privileged weren't much happier than the ordinary folk.

Researchers have identified a number of traits that seem to be shared by happy people. They are mostly extroverts and largely optimistic, they have a sense of control and self-esteem. In this context, they have offered several suggestions that could contribute towards the cultivation of individual happiness. A few of them have been given below.

- Learn to enjoy the moment and try to live in the present.
- Take control of your time.
- Always be positive. More and more evidence suggest that negative feeling lash back at us.
- Do not engage in self-absorbed idleness or spend your time sitting in front of the TV set. Get involved in something that utilizes your skills.
- Get moving. Exercise can be an antidote for depression.

Of course, we cannot say that all these steps will make us immune from sadness. But, it is definite that these steps can lead us along the road to happiness.

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YOURSELF.**

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