

**Revision Notes**  
**Chapter – 5**  
**Women Change the World**

---

**Who does what work?**

- Both men and women have different roles in society.
  - By getting education, women have opportunities to rise in every field.
  - Women's movements have risen to challenge discrimination in all parts of the world.
- It is essential that women are treated equally and with respect as they are as important as men in society.

**• Fewer Opportunities and Rigid Expectations:**

- (i) A lot of people feel that women are fit only for certain kinds of jobs like nursing or teaching.
- (ii) People believe that women are not fit for the technical jobs.
- (iii) In most families, women are taught that after school they have to get married.
- (iv) Laxmi Lakra, however, broke this stereotype image when she became the first woman engine driver of the Northern Railways.
- (v) We live in a society full of pressures. Boys are pressurised to think about getting a job that will pay a good salary. They are also teased and bullied if they do not behave like other boys. These pressures lead to children not able to cope with life's challenges when they become adults.

**• Learning for Change:**

- (i) Going to school is an important part of life. It shapes an individual's personality.
- (ii) Today, it is difficult for us to imagine that school and learning could be seen as out of bounds or not appropriate for some children.
- (iii) In the past, very few people learnt reading and writing. In communities that taught sons to read and write, daughters were not allowed to learn the alphabet.
- (iv) Even in families where skills like pottery, weaving and craft were taught, the contribution of daughters and women was seen as secondary.

(v) In the nineteenth century, new ideas about learning and education appeared. But there was a lot of opposition to educate girls even then.

(vi) In 1890s, Ramabai championed the cause of women's education.

- She never went to school but learnt to read and write from her parents.
- She was given the title 'Pandita' because she could read and write Sanskrit.
- She went on to set up a Mission in Khedgaon near Pune in 1898, where widows and poor women were encouraged not only to become literate but to be independent. They were taught a variety of skills from carpentry to running a printing press,

(vii) Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain learnt English from her elder brother and an elder sister inspite of family opposition and went on to become a famous writer. Though she knew how to read and write Urdu, she was stopped from learning Bangla and English. In those days, English was seen as a language that would expose girls to new ideas, which people thought were not correct for them.

(viii) Rashsundari Devi of Bengal was the first Indian woman to write an autobiography called 'Amar Jiban'.

- Her book titled Amar Jiban is the first known autobiography written by an Indian woman.
- Rashsundari Devi was a housewife from a rich landlord's family. At that time, it was believed that if a woman learnt to read and write, she would bring bad luck to her husband and become a widow. Despite this, she taught herself how to read and write in secret, well after her marriage.

• **Schooling and Education Today:** Today both boys and girls attend school in large numbers.

• Difference in their Education Still remains because:

(i) India has a census every 10 years which counts the population of the country. This information is used to measure things like literacy, sex-ratio, etc.

(ii) A huge number of SC and ST children leave school at an early age. The 2011 census even shows that Muslim girls are less likely than Dalit girls to complete primary school.

(iii) Many reasons like non-availability of teachers and schools, lack of transport, cost of education, indifferent attitude of teachers and parents are responsible for negligence of

education of some children.

• **Women's Movement:**

(i) Women have individually and collectively struggled to bring about changes. This is called Women's Movement.

(ii) Different strategies have been used to spread awareness, fight discrimination and seek justice. Many men support the women's movement as well. The diversity, passion and efforts of those involved make it a very vibrant movement.

(iii) These movements are related to campaigning, raising awareness, protesting and showing solidarity.

**Campaigning:**

(i) Some examples of successful campaigns are efforts made by the women's movement led the Supreme Court to formulate guidelines in 1997 to protect women against sexual harassment at the workplace and within educational institutions.

**Raising Awareness:**

(i) An important part of the women's movements' work is to raise public awareness on women's rights issues. Their message has been spread through street plays, songs and public meetings.

**Protesting:**

(i) The women's movement raises its voice when violations against women take place or for example, when a law or policy acts against their interests. Public rallies and demonstrations are a very powerful way of drawing attention to injustices.

**Showing Solidarity:**

(i) The women's movement is also about showing solidarity with other women and causes. For example, celebrating International Women's Day and sharing each other's thoughts.