

Revision Notes
Chapter – 4
Growing up as Boys and Girls

- Gender justice is an important issue to be highlighted.
- The society we grow up in teaches us what kind of behaviour is acceptable for girls and boys, what boys and girls can or cannot do.
- The roles women play and the work they do are usually valued less than the roles men play and the work they do.

• **Growing up in Samoa in the 1920s:**

(i) The Samoan islands are one of the large groups of small islands in the southern part of the Pacific Ocean.

(ii) In 1920s, children on these islands did not go to school. Fishing was a very important activity on the islands. Young people, therefore, learnt to undertake long fishing expeditions. But they learnt this at different points in their childhood.

(iii) When the babies started walking on own, they were left under the care of their older brothers and sisters. Children as old as five years looked after their younger siblings.

(iv) After attaining nine years of age, boys joined the older boys for outdoor activities like fishing and planting coconuts. However, girls continued looking after the younger ones.

(v) When girls became teenagers, i.e., 14 years of age, they were allowed more freedom as they could then go for fishing and plantation activities or help their mothers in cooking, etc.

• **Growing up male in Madhya Pradesh in the 1960s:**

(i) In Madhya Pradesh, India, boys and girls had a different outlook.

(ii) The girls' school was designed very differently from the boys' school. They had a central courtyard where they played in total seclusion and safety from the outside world. The boys' school had no such courtyard and the playground was just a big space attached to the school.

(iii) As a result, the girls seemed to be more purposeful and disciplined as they walked in lines. The girls always went in groups, perhaps because they also carried fears of being teased or attacked.

(iv) In most societies, including our own, the roles men and women play or the work they do, are not valued equally. Men and women do not have the same status.

• **Valuing Housework:**

(i) Many women work in offices and many do only household work.

(ii) Across the world, the main responsibility for housework and care-giving tasks, like looking after the family, especially children, the elderly and sick members, lies with women. However, their roles and work are not valued.

(iii) Valuing housework is an important element which needs to be propagated in society.

Lives of domestic workers:

(i) If we look at the lives of domestic workers, they are involved in activities like sweeping, cleaning, cooking, washing clothes and dishes or looking after children. Most of these are women.

(ii) A lot of housework actually involves many different tasks. The work includes strenuous and physically demanding situation. Hence, women need to work very hard.

(iii) If we add up the housework and the work, women do outside the home, we find that women spend much more time working than men and have much less time for leisure.

• **Women's work and equality:**

(i) While the constitution does not discriminate between males and females in reality, discrimination still carries on.

(ii) The government has set up Anganwadis or child care centres in several villages to help women.

(iii) The government has passed laws that make it mandatory for organisations that have more than 30 women employees to provide crèche facilities. The provision of crèches helps many women to take up employment outside the home. It also makes it possible for more girls to attend schools.