

Unit

1

Flights of Freedom

*"I am no bird; and no net ensnares me:
I am a free human being with an independent will."*

- Charlotte Brontë

About the Unit

There is an increasing realization and recognition that empowering women is an urgent need of the hour. In most countries, including India, social reformers and leaders have been doing a lot towards empowering women. Still, we have miles to go. This unit tells us how education, determination and courage help women break the shackles of socio-cultural taboos.

The unit comprises a speech "The 3Ls of Empowerment" by Christine Lagarde, the first woman Finance Minister of France, a poem "Any Woman" by Katharine Tynan, a story "Matchbox" by Ashapurna Debi, and an anecdote "Horegallu" by Sudha Murty.

Let's begin:

- ✦ Look at the collage given below.
- ✦ Identify the personalities and the fields they are related to.
- ✦ What are they famous for?
- ✦
- ✦

Smita Patil
The Face Of New Indian Cinema

Helen Boaden
Director, BBC News Group

People thought Mary Kom will never win a medal again after I took the break to have a baby. I wanted to prove them wrong. Challenges fire me.

J.K. Rowling
“Wherever I am, if I’ve got a book with me, I have a place I can go and be happy.”
J.K. Rowling

Think and discuss:

- ✦ Have you ever thought about the various roles taken by women in their homes and outside?
- ✦ What are the challenges faced by women today?
- ✦ Are women equipped to meet those challenges?

I. Read and reflect:

Emancipation and empowerment of women is of prime importance in every society. In our country, we have achieved partial success, but we still have a long way to go. What should we do to achieve this goal?

Here is a speech on the requisites of women empowerment. Read on:

THE 3LS OF EMPOWERMENT

Christine Lagarde

Good afternoon.

It is great to be among friends and kindred spirits.

The 21st century poses many challenges that require new ways of thinking, none more important than the economic role of women in a rapidly changing world. But women today remain blocked from contributing their true potential. This has a huge cost. In some countries, per capita income lag significantly because women are denied equal opportunity. They represent half the world's population, but contribute far less than 50 per cent of economic activity. What is needed to change this picture is a concerted effort to open the door to opportunity with what I call the "3 Ls" of women's empowerment: learning, labour and leadership.

First about learning: Education is the foundation upon which any change is built. Learning helps women to help themselves and break the shackles of exclusion. Nowhere is this more essential

than in the developing world. There is an African adage that goes: "If you educate a boy, you train a man. If you educate a girl, you train a village."

If learning is just the first step, labour is the second. Labour facilitates women to flourish and achieve their true potential. But at present, when women participate in the workforce, they too often tend to get stuck in low-paying, low-status and low-security jobs. Globally, women earn only three-quarters as much as men – even with the same level of education and in the same occupation. Surely, one of our most basic norms should be "equal pay for equal work!" Recent researches show that eliminating gender gaps in economic participation can bring an increase in per capita income.

We can undoubtedly promote more opportunity for women in the workplace. It is all about changing laws; for example, by ensuring that property and inheritance laws do not discriminate against women.

Read and respond

1. What are the three essential factors for empowerment?
2. What is the role of learning in empowering women?

It also means policies that encourage education and health care. Moreover, we need to provide greater access to credit so that women can achieve greater economic independence. So, learning and labour are key factors.

The third "L" is leadership that enables women to rise and fulfil their innate abilities and talents. Here, there is plenty of room for improvement. The irony is that when women lead they tend to do as good a job as others, if not a better job. They are more likely to make decisions based on consensus-building, inclusion, compassion and with a focus on long-term sustainability. It is true that women sometimes lack the confidence to match their

competence. But they need to change that mindset and reset the narrative in their favour. So it is essential that women be ready to "dare the difference" – to take risks and step outside their comfort zones. Nonetheless, even those with the drive to succeed continue to face barriers: whether we are talking about providing primary education for girls in a village, or executive positions for women in business.

It is time to create a world where all women can meet their potential without impediment or prejudice and the world will reap the benefits. The three Ls will help us get there.

If we dare the difference, the difference will deliver.

Thank you very much.

3. How can we promote more opportunities for women in the workplace?

About the Author

Christine Lagarde, born in Paris, on 1 January 1956, is the first woman to become the Finance Minister of a G8 economy and to head the International Monetary Fund (IMF). She calls for opening the doors to women's learning, labour and leadership in the economic field. This speech was delivered at the National Democratic Institute, Washington DC, on 19 May 2014.



Glossary:

kindred spirits (n)	:	people who think alike
concerted (adj)	:	done in combination
shackle (n)	:	bondage
exclusion (n)	:	not allowing someone to take part in an activity
adage (n)	:	a wise saying
facilitate (v)	:	to enable
credit (n)	:	loan, funds
innate (adj)	:	inborn
consensus (n)	:	agreement
inclusion (n)	:	act of making a person part of a group
sustainability (n)	:	ability to continue over a period of time
comfort zone (n)	:	a situation or place where one feels safe or comfortable
impediment (n)	:	barrier

Think and write

- The role of educated empowered women in building a strong nation
- The role of learning, labour and leadership skills in making a woman liberated
- “Women should step outside their comfort zones.” Discuss.
- “Women sometimes lack confidence to match their competence.” Comment on the statement.
- How can we build self-confidence in women?

Activity I (Speech)

- Can speeches make an impact on the human mind?
- Why do we make speeches?

Here are the excerpts from two very well known persuasive speeches.

I. I have a Dream

Martin Luther King Jr., who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, had the ability to tailor his speaking style to suit the audience. 'I have a Dream' is a speech delivered by Martin Luther King Jr. on 28 August 1963, to tens of thousands of black Americans and others who assembled at Washington.

Five score years ago, a great American in whose symbolic shadow we stand, signed the Emancipation Proclamation...

One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of the vast ocean of material prosperity.... We have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition....

We have come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now....

Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

II. Friends, Romans...

The oration of Mark Antony in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is an oft-quoted declamation. It is a typical example of a persuasive speech that sparked a conflagration for change in the minds of the audience.

I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them...

He was my friend, faithful and just to me:

But, Brutus says he was ambitious;

And Brutus is an honourable man...

When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:

Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:

.....

You all did see that on the Lupercal

I thrice presented him a kingly crown,

Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?

Yet, Brutus says he was ambitious;

And, sure, he is an honourable man.

Your teacher will help you listen to the audio version of these speeches. You may also watch the video version of these speeches.

- Do you remember any such famous speech? If so, provide the following details.
 - Who** delivered it?
 - What** was the occasion?
 - When** was it delivered?
 - What** was the purpose of this speech?
 - Who** were the audience?
 - How** was it presented?
- Christine Lagarde suggests various means of empowering women. She persuasively insists on the idea that women should think and act independently. **Keeping this in mind, prepare the script of a persuasive speech on the topic 'Education is the Key to Women Empowerment' to be delivered at the school assembly on International Women's Day (March 8).**

Tips

Purpose of the speech
 Type of audience addressed
 Structure : logical, clear, sequencing of ideas
 Contents/messages/facts/statistics
 Persuasive techniques: repetition, satire
 Appropriate use of language: rhetorical devices
 Use of stress, rhythm and intonation
 Tone: formal/informal

II. Read and enjoy:

What is your concept of freedom? When does a person enjoy real freedom?

Do women enjoy real freedom?

Women support a family, but are they really supported by the family?

Do women share equal status with men?



ANY WOMAN

Katharine Tynan

I am the pillars of the house;
The keystone of the arch am I.
Take me away, and roof and wall
Would fall to ruin me utterly.

I am the fire upon the hearth,
I am the light of the good sun,
I am the heat that warms the earth,
Which else were colder than a stone.

At me the children warm their hands;
I am their light of love alive.
Without me cold the hearthstone stands,
Nor could the precious children thrive.

I am the twist that holds together
The children in its sacred ring,
Their knot of love, from whose close tether
No lost child goes a-wandering.

I am the house from floor to roof,
I deck the walls, the board I spread;
I spin the curtains, warp and woof,
And shake the down to be their bed.

I am their wall against all danger,
Their door against the wind and snow,
Thou whom a woman laid in a manger,
Take me not till the children grow!

About the Author

Katharine Tynan (1859-1931) is an Irish-born writer known mainly for her novels and poetry. She has to her credit more than a score of novels and seven books of verse. She usually wrote under the name Katharine Tynan Hinkson. Her human sympathy is keen, tender, warm, and constant. The poem "Any Woman" presents the all-embracing power of a woman to hold a family together.



Glossary: _____

tether (n)	:	rope
warp and woof (idiom)	:	the underlying structure or foundation of something; <i>here</i> used figuratively. The expression alludes to the threads that run lengthwise (warp) and crosswise (woof) in a woven fabric.
down (n)	:	a covering of soft feathers
manger (n)	:	a trough, used to hold food for animals. Jesus Christ was born in a manger.

Read and respond

- Mention the underlying ideas in the expression 'pillars of the house'.
- How does the poet portray the bond between a mother and her children?
- Comment on the expression 'from floor to roof'. Attempt to coin another expression without changing the meaning.
- What is the symbolic significance of 'wind and snow'?
- Explain, in your own words, the concluding line of the poem.

Let's discuss

- Woman: the focal point of the family
- The qualities a woman needs to face the challenges of life

Think and write

- Analyse the theme of the poem keeping in view the plight of women in the Indian social scenario.
- Identify the major figure of speech used in the poem and describe its significance.
- What is the quantum of work done by a woman in a household? Can it be reduced? How?

Activity I (Composing lines)

- Try writing a few lines on any one of the following topics/themes.
- Mother's love
 - Sweet home
 -
 -

Activity II (Appreciation)

- Keeping in view the ideas discussed above, prepare an appreciation of the poem "Any Woman".

Activity III (Comparison)

- You are aware of the pivotal role of a woman, especially the mother at home. There are occasions when her self-effacing love is painfully missing, when the prayer 'Take me not till the children grow!' has not been realised.

Now, read the poem "The Toys" by Coventry Patmore

My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
 And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
 Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
 I struck him, and dismiss'd
 With hard words and unkiss'd,
 His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
 Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
 I visited his bed,
 But found him slumbering deep,
 With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
 From his late sobbing wet.
 And I, with moan,
 Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;
 For, on a table drawn beside his head,
 He had put, within his reach,
 A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
 A piece of glass abraded by the beach
 And six or seven shells,
 A bottle with bluebells
 And two French copper coins, ranged there with
 careful art,

To comfort his sad heart.
 So when that night I pray'd
 To God, I wept, and said:
 Ah, when at last we lie with tranced breath,
 Not vexing Thee in death,
 And Thou rememberest of what toys
 We made our joys,
 How weakly understood
 Thy great commanded good,
 Then, fatherly not less
 Than I whom Thou hast moulded from the clay,
 Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
 "I will be sorry for their childishness."

Glossary: _____

slumber (v)	:	to sleep
abrade(v)	:	to scrape or wear away by friction or erosion
trance (n)	:	a semiconscious state, as between sleeping and waking
vex (v)	:	to make (someone) feel annoyed, frustrated, or worried
rememberest (archaic) (v)	:	to remember
wrath (n)	:	extreme anger

- Answer the following questions. They will add to your comprehension of the poem.
1. What is the theme of the poem?
 2. Do you justify the father's action? Why?
 3. What is the symbolic significance of the toys?
 4. Comment on these lines citing the importance of the mother in a family:
'Take me not till the children grow!' {"Any woman"}
'His Mother, who was patient, being dead.' {"The Toys"}
- Now, compare the poem with "Any Woman" and prepare a review focusing on the themes and their significance.

III. Read and reflect:

“There are two ways of spreading light...

To be the candle, or the mirror that reflects it.”

Women should choose between being a candle or a mirror, and work for their own emancipation as well as for the generations to come.

MATCHBOX

Ashapura Debi

I always compare women to matchboxes. Why? Because of the way matchboxes are - even though they have enough gunpowder to set a hundred Lankas¹ aflame, they sit around meek and innocent, in the kitchen, in the pantry, in the bedroom, here, there, anywhere - women, too, are exactly the same!

You want an example?

Then, look carefully at that enormous three-storey house in front of us —

Sunday morning.

The washerman has come and is waiting.

Moments before handing over a heap of Ajit's dirty clothes to the washerman, Nomita goes through the pockets one last time and discovers the letter.

A twisted, crumpled envelope with its mouth torn, and on the envelope, Nomita's name.

A flame goes up dop in all Nomita's nerves and veins. She drops the clothes in her hand and sits on the bed to open the letter; the first thing she looks at is the date. Going by the date, the letter must have come about three days earlier.

She turns over the envelope and matches the postmark to the date; that too bears the same witness.

Yes, the letter came three days ago.

Ajit has opened it and read it, then crumpled it and twisted it and dropped it into his pocket and left it there. Hasn't felt the need to mention it even once to Nomita.

The flame that had gone up dop now burns steadily, hissing, sounding its note on each of her mind's strings.

Because this incident is not a casual oversight; it's deliberate.

Read and respond

1. Why are women compared to matchboxes?
2. What makes Nomita furious?

Ajit's nature is exactly like that.

Somehow, he's gained possession of the key to the letter-box, fishing it through the gaps among the fifty-two hands of this joint family. And whenever there's a letter with Nomita's name on the envelope, he opens and reads it first, and only then does he give it to her. It's possible that oftentimes he doesn't give it to her at all. At least, that's the suspicion that has taken root, taken deep root, in Nomita's mind.

Even though, to this day, Ajit cannot truthfully make the claim that he's been able to discover any letter in the slightest degree suspicious.

Still - still - this ugly habit of his won't go.

- Not with Nomita's anger, not with her taking offence, not with bitter reproaches, her trying to shame him, sarcasm - not with anything.

If she mentions it, first he tries to laugh it away, and if laughter doesn't get him out of deep water, he scolds her.

She sits perfectly still for a minute and reads the letter through.

It's nothing much, a letter from Nomita's mother.

It's her standard speech—the good woman has once again placed on

the record the news of her various hardships and complaints getting worse, misfortune upon misfortune, the ceiling of her room is cracked and the rain water falls through in ceaseless streams; if this is not immediately remedied, she will have to die crushed under the weight of a collapsed roof. Of course, she does not dread that eventuality. Her daughter is a queen, her son-in-law high-minded, large-hearted. Therefore, —etc. etc.

An indigent widow, without husband or son, she was successful in consigning her daughter to a wealthy family's house on the strength of looks alone. But the good lady has never stopped taking credit, at the slightest opportunity, for her skill in the matter. And she's been finding such opportunities all along.

Whenever Ajit sees a new letter from Nomita's mother, he smiles derisively and says, "Why bother to read that? I'll go and fill out a money-order form."

Nomita's head hangs low with the shame and the insult of it. So, some time ago, out of anger and grief, Nomita forbade her mother from writing to her on postcards. She thought that from then on she'd

3. What is the suspicion in Nomita's mind?
4. What is called an "ugly habit"? Why?
5. How does Ajit react when Nomita mentions about his "ugly habit"?
6. What are the expectations of Nomita's mother?
7. Comment on Ajit's attitude towards his mother-in-law.

try to send her a little money, whatever she could pull together, in secret. So—this was what came of letters in envelopes too.

Suddenly, Nomita flames into anger at her mother.

Why, why, does she keep on begging like this?

Why won't she let Nomita keep her self-respect, her dignity. No, this time she will write and tell her mother clearly: "I can't do any more, don't hope for anything from me."

Right then, Ajit steps into the room after finishing his leisurely Sunday bath. Nomita's sharp indignation at the insult, simmering all this while, seems to want to dash itself violently against him. Nomita roars out, "When did this letter arrive?"

Ajit glances at her obliquely, estimating the magnitude of his error.

"Another handful of cash for this," he had thought, and decided not to give the letter to Nomita; he was going to tear it up and throw it away. He's made a big mistake.

Not that Ajit is going to feel abashed about that.

As though trying hard to remember, he says, "Letter? What

letter? Oho, yes yes! Indeed, there was a letter from your mother. I just hadn't got around to giving it to you."

"Why hadn't you got around to it? Why? Why? Answer me, why hadn't you got around to it?"

"What a nuisance!" Ajit says. "I'd forgotten—why else?"

"Liar!" Nomita hisses like a snake. "Why are you saying whatever comes to your mouth? Don't people forget?"

"No they don't! Why did you open my letter?"

This charge Ajit tries to scatter to the winds. "What if I opened it? My own wife's letter—"

"Be quiet, be quiet, I tell you. For what reason should you open my letters? Haven't I told you a thousand times not to?"

Ajit doesn't fear Nomita's anger, he fears a row. So he smiles an affected smile and says, "If you're forbidding it, then it's a definite something. Shouldn't I make sure that no one's passing you love letters in secret?"

"Stop it! What a common, vulgar man you are!"

After this, it's not possible for Ajit to smile his fake smile any longer.

8. What makes Nomita call Ajit a 'liar'? Is her action justifiable? Why?

9. Comment on the simile in "Nomita hisses like a snake."

10. How do you think Ajit would react if Nomita reads the letters addressed to him?

Now, he too picks up the poisoned knife. He says, "Is that so! Those who whine day and night and hold out their palms to their son-in-law, they're the high-class people! A dung-picker's daughter becomes a queen, and so—"

"Shut up!" Nomita yells.

Their room's on the third floor, that's a blessing. Otherwise, with that scream, everyone would have come to look!

"Shut up?" Ajit roars out. "What shut up? I'll do what I want, what I please. What will you do? Can you do anything?"

"I can't? I can't do anything?" Almost panting, Nomita pronounces each word clearly: "You want to see if I can do anything?"

And immediately, she does something that is astonishing. She grabs Ajit's matchbox that's lying near his cigarettes on the table, and fssh! She lights a matchstick and touches it to her sari.

Instantly it flares up, the very fine *anchol* of a wealthy wife's sari.

The very next instant, Ajit, "Have you gone mad?" he says, and jumps to her side and grabs the burning patch and slaps it between his hands and puts out the fire.

And—to tell the truth, now he's a little afraid. He looks fearfully at Nomita's face. Sees a fire burning

there, bright, blazing red.

He doesn't have the courage to put out that fire by slapping it between his hands, so he tries to pour water on it. With great difficulty, he attempts to speak normally. "You lose all common sense when you get angry, don't you? A woman, and such anger! Oof!"

Who knows what Nomita would have said next, but right then, her niece Rini steps into the room.

Immediately, she says, piercingly, "So, Khuri-ma,² how much longer does the washerman have to wait? If you don't want to give him any of your clothes, at least tell him that!"

For a second or two, Nomita is still, perhaps recalling the washerman's face, waiting for her downstairs, then she picks up the dirty clothes and starts sorting them. She says in a calm tone, "Go tell him I'm coming. I'm bringing the clothes."

Nomita speaks her mind, so no one attacks her outright, to her face, they only pinch her with sharp words. Her second sister-in-law is almost exhausted with work this morning, and, seeing her, she puts a twisted smile on her sweat-streaked face and says, "Well, that's something, at least, you finally decided to come down from upstairs! Baba! There's no good or bad time for you, you find the smallest excuse to go into your

11. What is the "poisoned knife"?

12. How does Nomita frighten Ajit?

13. What is the plight of Nomita in the family?

room and get cozy with your husband. Does the love-talk never get old?"

Nomita looks around once, to get a sense of the atmosphere. Sees the hurly-burly of the morning, sees the forest of people on either side. Her voice must not tremble. So she too smiles a small smile and says in an extremely soft voice, "Oh, it's nothing like that! You should come and peek in sometime. Our talk is all angry talk, do you know?"

Mejo-wife³ laughs Hoo-hoo and says, "Stop it, Naw-wife⁴, don't cover up the forbidden fish with your pious spinach. We haven't been raised on donkey grass. Why do we need to peek in? What you're showing us right in front of our eyes, twenty-four hours a day—"

Nomita laughs a laugh that can bring an attractive flush to a white face. After laughing that laugh, she says, "Go on. You say the naughtiest things!"

The busy Boro-wife⁵ runs up. "Have you chopped the vegetables yet? Or are you just telling stories?" And suddenly she stops and starts, "What's that? What's this unlucky thing, Naw-wife? How did you burn your anchol that way?"

Nomita too starts, but only for a moment. The next instant, she folds the anchol back quickly and says, laughing, "Oh, don't remind me! It's exactly what you keep

warning me about. I didn't listen, and see what happened! I used my *anchol* to lift a hot pot of water off the stove—and that did it."

Nomita pulls the basket of potatoes towards herself and sits down to peel potatoes, and in her mind she keeps thinking about how she might be able, secretly, to send her mother a few rupees. She can't really write to her: "I can't do any more, don't hope for anything from me."

Over there, the entire village knows Nomita is a queen—Nomita's husband is high-minded, large-hearted.

This—this is precisely why I compare women to matchboxes. Even when they have the materials within themselves to set off many raging fires, they never flare up and burn away the mask of men's high-mindedness, their large-heartedness. They don't burn away their own colourful shells.

They won't burn them—the men know this too.

That's why they leave them scattered so carelessly in the kitchen, in the pantry, in the bedroom, here, there, anywhere.

Quite without fear, they put them in their pockets.

(Translated from Bengali by Prasenjit Gupta)

14. Comment on the expression 'forest of people'. What does it tell us about the structure of Indian joint families?

Notes:-

1. A reference to the *Ramayana* and the story of Rama's army of monkeys who set fire to Ravana's Lanka.

The following are kinship terms in a Bengali joint family.

2. Khuri-ma: father's younger brother's wife
3. Mejo-wife: second-oldest brother's wife
4. Naw-wife: fourth-oldest brother's wife
5. Boro-wife: eldest brother's wife.

About the Author

Ashapura Debi (1909-1995) is a prominent Bengali novelist and poet, widely honoured with a number of prizes and awards. She was awarded the Jnanpith Award and the Padma Shri by the Government of India in 1976, and the degree of D. Litt by the Universities of Jabalpur, Rabindra Bharati, Burdwan and Jadavpur. For her contribution as a novelist and short story writer, the Sahitya Akademi conferred its highest honour, the Fellowship in 1994.



This short story is translated from Bengali by Prasenjit Gupta, a translator and writer.

Glossary:

meek (adj)	:	humble	derisively (adv)	:	contemptuously
sarcasm (n)	:	irony	indignation (n)	:	resentment
eventuality (n)	:	possibility	row (n)	:	quarrel
indigent (adj)	:	extremely poor			

Think and write

- Sketch the character of Nomita. (You may analyse the sentences given below.)
 - Why, why, does she keep on begging like this?
 - "Stop it! What a common, vulgar man you are!"
 - Nomita laughs a laugh that can bring an attractive flush to a white face.
- Do you think there is a set pattern for exhibiting a woman's emotions? Is she always emotionally under stress? Justify your answer.
- Prepare a write-up discussing the space of women in a family.
- How does the author substantiate the comparison between a woman and a matchbox?

Activity I (Review)

- It is often said that an empowered woman is the one who can 'find her own voice', 'speak up', and 'be seen and heard'. In the present world, what we need is to foster a man-woman relationship which contributes to healthy, mutual development. Man and woman should move forward together, supporting and respecting each other, and being open to different opinions and situations.

How far is the above statement relevant to Nomita in Ashapurna Debi’s “Matchbox”? Prepare a review of the story, emphasizing the role of its women characters.

Activity II (Panel Discussion)

- The word ‘panel’ means a group of experts. The discussion held among these expert members in front of an audience could be called a panel discussion.

It helps to clarify the difficult aspects of a topic in a systematic and objective manner.

There are three sets of participants in a panel discussion.

They are : Panellist, Moderator, Audience.

Now, conduct a panel discussion on the topic “Indian women—finding a space in the socio-cultural milieu”.

Points to be considered:

- The effect of the media on a woman’s self-image
- Healthy women, healthy nation
- The need for cultivating mental strength and mental toughness
- The need for a productive and harmonious work environment
- Acting as a mentor and guide to other women and girls
- Other marginalised sections of society
- The pivotal role of women from the past to the present

- Panellists are experts in the field concerned. Decide upon the panellists (panel members) and list them.

Panellist	Designation

Select the moderator who facilitates the panel discussion. He/she initially welcomes the panellists and introduces them to the audience.

- Prepare the script of a speech welcoming the panellists and introducing them to the audience.

Good morning,

I am extremely happy/It gives me immense pleasure/ Today we are going to have

.....

- After the panel presentation and discussion, the moderator synthesizes and summarizes the key points.

Prepare the script of a speech summarizing the panel discussion.
Let's review what we have discussed today/It's been great discussing/On the whole, it has turned out to be a fruitful venture

(Hints : points raised by the panellists and their relevance, vote of thanks to the panellists, etc.)

Activity III (Blurb writing)

- Blurb is the description of a book on its back cover. It's a brief summary of the book designed for marketing.

It has no uniform pattern. Given below is a sample of a book blurb.



The Temple Tiger And More Man-Eaters of Kumaon

Jim Corbett

This is the last of Jim Corbett's books on his unique and thrilling hunting experiences in the Indian Himalayas.

Corbett writes with an acute awareness of all jungle sights and sounds, his words charged with a great love of the human beings that lay within his hunting terrain. Together with the modesty, calm and precision of this prose, these qualities make these stories very much a part of the classic Corbett corpus.

'Jungle love is not a science that can be learnt from textbooks; it can, however, be absorbed, a little at a time, and the absorption process can go on indefinitely, for the book of nature has no beginning as it has no end...'

- Jim Corbett

OTHER BOOKS BY JIM CORBETT

Man-Eaters of Kumaon
The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag
My India
Jungle Lore

- Now prepare a blurb of *Pratham Pratishruti* making use of the hints given below.
 - Ashapura Debi created a space of her own in the world of creative literature, and Gender Studies.
 - She once said, “Slowly and steadily a completely new world was getting created within my mind. It was a world of comprehension, of feeling. It was a world with a never-ending flow of feelings.”
 - Most of her writings marked a firm protest against the inequality and injustice rooted in gender discrimination.
 - Her magnum opus *Pratham Pratishruti* won for her the Jnanpith Award.
 - The novel is about an uncommon woman, Satyavati who dared to break the so-called rules made to control the lives of the Bengali women in those days.
 - The novel that depicts the endless suffering and the liberation of women in Bengal is the true story of women everywhere in India.
 - The novel inspires young minds to create an enlightened world free of segregation.
 - The novel was published by Ananda Publishers (first published in 1964)
 - Notable works by Ashapura Debi - *Subarnolata*, *Bakul Katha*

A good book blurb

- opens with a catchy statement
- appeals to the reader’s interest
- urges the reader to buy / read the book
- gives necessary information about the author, publisher, year of publication, etc.
- appears short and dramatic
- describes in simple direct language where the story begins, what the circumstances are, its socio-cultural relevance, etc.

IV. Read and reflect:

*“Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight,
Make me a child again just for tonight!”*

Remembering the good old childhood days often fills our mind with freshness and vigour and revitalizes us enough to go forward with confidence.

HOREGALLU

Sudha Murty

Hot summer days remind me of my childhood in a little village. There was a large banyan tree right in the middle of the village, and I would spend many hours playing under it during my holidays. The tree was like a massive umbrella with its branches providing much needed shade and succour. Travellers spent some time sitting under it and catching their breath before going on their way. To make them comfortable, there was a 'horegallu' under the tree. Horegallu literally means 'a stone that can bear weight.' It was a large flat stone placed horizontally over two vertical ones, thus making a stone bench on which anyone could sit and rest a while, chat with a fellow traveller and exchange news of the road. Cool water would be kept in earthen pots near the bench and people could quench their thirst before starting their journeys again. I am sure

similar simple arrangements can be found in villages all over the country.



The horegallu in our village holds special memories for me as it is inextricably linked with my grandfather. He was a retired schoolteacher and would spend hours every day, sitting under the banyan tree and talking to those resting there. When I would get tired of playing, I would sit next to him and observe the people he was speaking to and listen to their

Read and respond

1. What is a “horegallu”? What is its purpose?
2. What are the special memories the author associates with “horegallu”?

conversations. Most of them were villagers taking a break from their work in the fields nearby. They had to walk long distances each day, carrying heavy burdens on their heads. Tired out by the heat, they would drink the cool water, wash their faces with it and chat with grandfather. Their conversation would be about their daily lives and worries.

'Masterji, this summer has been so hot. I have never seen such dry weather'. Or, 'Masterji, it is getting difficult for me to carry these large loads on my head. Thank God for this horegallu. I wish my son would help, but he only wants to go to the city....' They spoke about the difficulties they lived with. My grandfather could only listen to them but just talking to him seemed to refresh them for the journey. After some time, they would pick up their burdens with some ease and go on their way. The horegallu was an important feature in their lives and as a child I would often not understand why they blessed it so often for being there. After all, it was only a stone bench. It was my grandfather, who told me, 'Child, a horegallu is essential in any journey. We all

carry our burdens according to our situations and capacities. But every once in a while, we need to stop, put down that burden and rest. Only then can we be refreshed enough to pick up the load once more. The horegallu gives everyone that opportunity to do so. It helps people regain their strength.'

Later on in life, I got to see something that reminded me of that stone bench once again. I was working in Bombay (now Mumbai). One of my colleagues, Ratna, was a senior clerk, middle-aged and always smiling. She had done her graduation and been working in the company for nearly twenty-five years. She went about her repetitive, mundane work with an infectious cheerfulness.

Every day, during the lunch hour, she would sit with some person in one of the rooms, and they would have long chats. I would often wonder what they talked about. One day, I finally asked her, 'Ratna, what do you talk with each person for the whole lunch hour?'

Ratna smiled and said simply, 'They share their troubles with me'.

3. How does the grandfather refresh the travellers?
4. Is "horegallu" essential in a journey? Why?
5. "Horegallu" gives everyone the opportunity to regain their strength. What does the author try to indicate here?
6. Bring out the symbolic significance of the word "burden".
7. Comment on the expression "infectious cheerfulness."
8. What does Ratna do during lunch hours?

'But how can you solve the troubles of so many people? Do you always have an answer for them?'

'No, I only listen'.

'And that is enough? That solves the problem?' I was young and incredulous at such a simplistic outlook. But Ratna answered with the same patience and affection that she must have used with all my colleagues, 'I am not a trained counsellor or an intellectual. No one can solve your problem. You have to do it yourself.'

'Then how do you help them by listening to them?'

'God has given me two ears to listen to others. I hear them out with sympathy and without any judgement. When a person in trouble or under a lot of strain finds an outlet for his worries, it relieves half his burden.'

I thought for sometime and said, 'But don't you ever break the confidence and tell others the secrets you hear, even by mistake?'

'Not even in my dreams. I consider that to be the worst kind of betrayal. I don't think there is a greater sin than betraying someone's confidence. They tell me their worries because they know I will never talk about it or gossip about it to another person. Only when they know their words are secure with me, can they talk to me freely. This way I relieve their burden for a short while till they are ready to pick themselves up and carry on with their journey.'

Her words uncannily echoed my grandfather's, sitting on the stone bench under the banyan tree. Perhaps, in their own small ways, without access to great wealth, both these people were doing tremendous social service. No one thought of acknowledging their work or rewarding them for it, but they continued to do so, as these acts of kindness gave them joy. If ever now I happen to pass a horegallu in a village, I remember them and wish there were many more of them in this world.

9. What is Ratna's simplistic outlook?

10. The author wishes there were many more of "horegallus" in the world. Comment.

About the Author

Sudha Murty was born in 1950 at Shiggaon in North Karnataka. An M.Tech in Computer Science, she teaches Computer Science to postgraduate students. A prolific writer in English and Kannada, she has written novels, technical books, travelogues, collections of short stories and non-fiction pieces. 'Horegallu' is taken from *The Old Man and His God: Discovering the Spirit of India*, 2006, Penguin Books, New Delhi.



Glossary: _____

succour (n) : support
mundane (adj) : dull, ordinary

incredulous (adj) : doubtful
uncannily (adv) : strangely, mysteriously

Think and write

- Do you think that the grandfather and Ratna were doing some tremendous social service? Explain.
- Can we relate grandfather and Ratna to a horegallu? Why?

Activity I (Narration)

- Ratna in “Horegallu” says, “God has given me two ears to listen to others. I hear them out with sympathy and without any judgement. When a person in trouble or under a lot of strain finds an outlet for his worries, it relieves half his burden.”
 - a) Do you think mere listening can solve a problem? Identify the qualities of a good listener.
 - b) Imagine that Nomita gets a chance to talk to Ratna. How would she present her worries?

Begin as follows:

I am Nomita. Yesterday I had a quarrel with my husband...

Activity II (Language practice)

It was a large flat stone placed horizontally over two vertical ones, thus making a stone bench on which anyone could sit and rest a while, chat with a fellow traveller and exchange news of the road. Cool water would be kept in earthen pots near the bench and people could quench their thirst before starting their journeys again. I am sure similar simple arrangements can be found in the villages all over the country.

- Read and pick out the adjectives and categorize them based on the nature of their description.

Now, rewrite the passage substituting the adjectives without any change of meaning.

Activity III (Comparison)

- In this unit, you have got acquainted with several women characters, both real and fictitious. The following excerpts present their ideas on empowerment.

‘I always compare women to match boxes’. — *Ashapura Debi*

‘I am the heat that warms the earth,

Which else were colder than a stone.’ — *Katharine Tynan*

‘I don’t think there is a greater sin than betraying someone’s confidence.’ — *Ratna*

‘For what reason should you open my letters? Haven’t I told you a thousand times not to.’ — *Nomita to Ajit*

‘I wish there were more horegallus in the world.’ — *Sudha Murty*

‘It is time to create a world where all women can meet their potential ... and the world will reap the benefits.’ —*Christine Lagrade*

Now, attempt a comparison of these women with regard to their ideas on being empowered.

You may use the adjectives provided.

- kind
- dominating
- severe
- sympathetic
-
-

Activity IV (Comprehension)

Read the following advertisement.

Reading shapes you.
 Kind attention passionate book nerds...
 Books which take you to another world help you escape daily problems. Books are beyond imagination. A good book is always a reliable companion. Children in their care are always happy. But today we are getting distracted by the digital world. The best way to get focused again is to disconnect and read an excellent book.
 Here, you have the wonderland of sparkling letters.
 A bookstore that has a spacious and air-conditioned reading hall is at your service.
 Our new bookstore
 PEACOCK PLUMES
 Come, drink to the lees...

1. What is the theme of this advertisement?
2. According to the advertisement, what is the threat faced by readers today?
3. What are the advantages of reading?

.....

4. With books, you..... than with a computer. (Complete the sentence using a comparative)
5. Pick out from the advertisement the words, phrases and clauses used for the purpose of description.

Tips

Clause

A clause is a group of related words containing a subject and a predicate.

Adjective clauses are groups of words containing a subject and a verb that functions as adjectives. Adjective clauses are dependent and are introduced by dependent signals which are relative pronouns or relative adverbs. The relative pronouns are “who, whom, whose, which” or “that”. The relative adverbs are “when, where” or “why”.

The dog, which is very frisky, ran around the house.

Phrase

A phrase is a group of related words that does not contain a subject-verb relationship ie, it does not contain a subject and a predicate.

An **adjective phrase** (or adjectival phrase) is a phrase that tells us something about the noun it is modifying. The head (principal) word in an adjective phrase will be an adjective.

The nearby motel offers cheap but comfortable rooms.

Activity V (Language practice)

What makes our speech ornamental, vivid and picturesque?

Have a look at the conventional similes given below.

As black as coal

As good as gold

As loud as thunder

As slow as a snail

Are these similes attractive? Why?

Can you coin similar similes using appropriate adjectives?

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.....

.....

- Given below is the brochure of a female film festival. Go through it and fill in the blank spaces appropriately.

HELLO AND WELCOME

FEMALE FILM FESTIVAL 2015 IS HERE, THE BEST TIME OF THE YEAR FOR FILM.

The line-up is fantastic; as as daisies.

We have 15 previews, 10 special guests, special events, and 'Meet the Director': a platform dedicated to the brain behind the films.

Fine days to gorge yourself on the best films on offer.

Enjoy! Be as gay as a

Sd/-

FILMS AT A GLANCE

MANJADIKKURU

Anjali Menon's "Manjadikkuru" is an ode to the innocence that once existed in us. Appealing equally to viewers of all ages, the movie portrays the life of a young maid who is as pure as a Anjali Menon in this movie proves that she is as as a sculptor.

MITR, MY FRIEND

"Mitr, my friend" is Revathi's debut directorial venture. The movie which is as as an arrow is noted for having an all-women crew. It is about the plight of women who sacrifice their life for the betterment of the family. Lakshmi the protagonist feels as ----- as a drum on being transported to city life.

English Vinglish

The movie "English Vinglish" portrays the simple life of a quiet, sweet - tempered housewife, who is as sweet as a------. It calmly reveals how she endures negative comments from her well educated husband and daughter because of her inability to speak and understand English. Gauri Shinde proves herself to be as ----- as a judge in her judgement of life.

Makalkku

Jayaraj's "Makalkku" is an offbeat movie in which Shobana plays the role of Killeri, a mad woman. Her character makes one feel as -----as lead. The music by Ramesh Narayan is as soothing as a-----.

Activity VI (Review)

- Prepare a review of the film which influenced you the most.
{Hints : theme, screenplay, cast and credit, music, cinematography, etc.}

Activity VII (Let's edit)

- Given below is the opening paragraph of a review prepared by a student of class XII. There are a few errors in it. Identify them and refine the paragraph.

(Hint- The errors are in the following areas : Spelling, Tenses, Punctuation, Word order, Article, Concord, Preposition)

Gone with the wind

One of the classic film that define american cinema, Gone With the Wind is the rare example of a collaboration involving hundred of talents that turned out great. For millions of people, Gone With the Wind have helped to define the myth and reality of the country's most tragic period of history - the civil war and reconstruction. The popularity about Margaret Mitchell's bestselling novel allowed the filmmaker to be confident of its sucess. Of course, requisite attention to costumes and sets was paid. The film's visual effects - especially the burning of Atlanta- are in deed effective and memorable.

Gone With the Wind deserves the label epic it present enough detail to be a facsimile on reality.

Activity VIII (Project)

- Prepare a class magazine including stories, poems, anecdotes, reviews of prose and poems, etc.

OR

Organise a Film Festival on women. Include films with strong women characters and films by women film makers.

Prepare a report of the Film Festival for your school magazine.

Significant Learning Outcomes

The learners will be able to:

- analyse the concept of women's empowerment and understand the power of education as a tool for their liberation.
- uphold the importance of freedom.
- recognize the rights and privileges of women and fight for their equality in status with men.
- appreciate literature.
- identify the space of women in the Indian socio-cultural scenario.
- realize the role of an ideal listener and develop an empathetic attitude towards women's issues.
- prepare and deliver persuasive speeches.
- participate actively in panel discussions.
- present ideas systematically in panel discussions.
- discuss the pros and cons of an issue.
- become conversant with blurbs and attempt writing blurbs.
- compare poems and review pieces of prose.
- identify adjectives and substitute them effectively.
- familiarize themselves with various degrees of comparison and use them appropriately.
- browse the Internet for additional information.
- organize exhibitions/film festivals and present reports on them.
- edit the errors in a given passage.