

Indian Women in History: Co-Education

60 min

Critical Thinking

Non-Academic

Difficulty Level: Medium

Objective:



- To introduce the children to inspiring stories and to open the students up to different possibilities.
- To improve team work and group dynamics through peer learning.

What You Need:



- Notebooks
- Pencils
- Printables (at the end of the module)

Process:



- The facilitators will take a minimum of 2 stories and either divide the class into half or different sections can be told different stories. Divide the class in two groups such that half the students listen to the story of Savitribai and the other half the story of Kamala Devi.
- At this point also explain to the students the concept of peer learning through co-education and how they will be responsible to teach this story to their peers who are learning a different story.
- Conduct the session by telling them the story chosen and this can be aided with visual material such as pictures or videos.
- Once the story is done, ask the students to reflect on the story and have a small discussion with them on their thoughts and what they understood, liked or even disliked in the story and why they felt that way.

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- Next ask the students to note down 5-6 things they remember from the story that they would want to teach the other students in co-education. This would act as an aid during the peer learning session and they would be more confident in relaying the story.
- Divide them into groups of 4-5 students in each class and number the groups 1,2,3 etc. Then match group 1,2,3 of each class together for a peer learning session.
- Try conducting the peer learning session in an informal environment maybe in the main area of the school or other open spaces where the children can sit in a circle and talk.
- The facilitators should walk around and see how the peer learning is taking place and not be a part of it ideally. Initially for groups that are not participating or are not confident the facilitators can prompt them or help them but as this activity is conducted over a few sessions, the students will slowly become confident of teaching and learning with their peers.

INDIAN WOMEN IN HISTORY

Savitribai Phule

Savitribai was born in 1831 in Maharashtra. She belonged to the Mali community that was considered an Other Backward Class Community. She was married off at the age of 9 to Jyotiba Rao Phule who was then 13. Since both belonged to the backward class, Jyotirao even though he was a boy was not allowed to study. However, he was allowed to study in a missionary school till grade 7. He then started teaching Savitribai Phule at home and that's when she realised the importance of education. She then took up a teachers training at a missionary school and then started teaching. By 1851 Savitribai and Jyotirao had set up 3 schools. However, the villagers did not accept her teaching as he was from a backward class and a woman. They used to throw cow dung, stones and mud on her when she went to school as a teacher. However, this did not deject her from teaching. Jyotirao in fact gave her two saris so that she could change Her soiled sari in school. Along with being a champion for the education she started campaigning against child marriage and spoke in favour of widow remarriage. She also started a home for prevention of infanticide for all women especially those widows and if they wanted to leave their baby over thee they could. She adopted a child Yashwant from this home, another progressive move when adoption was not acceptable. He went on to become a doctor. One of the great stories about her is that when Jyotirao Phule passed away there was an argument as to who would light his pyre. Will it be his adopted son or a male relative. However, as this argument waged on Savitribai took the fire stick and concluded his last rites. She continued to champion various causes even after his death and was one of the first few women who bridged the inequalities in education. She's also called the first female teacher of India.

INDIAN WOMEN IN HISTORY

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay

Kamaladevi was a fighter, actor, social activist, art enthusiast, politician and free-thinking feminist all rolled into one, Kamaladevi's contributions to India are staggeringly diverse. Born on April 3, 1903, into a Saraswat Brahmin family in Mangalore, Kamaladevi was a daughter of Ananthaya Dhareshwar (a district collector in South Kanara district of the then-Madras Presidency)

Kamaladevi's early childhood was dotted by a succession of tragedies. The first of these were when Kamaladevi's elder sister, Saguna, whom she was very close to, died in her teens soon after an early marriage. Soon after, at the age of seven, she lost her father. To compound the tragedy, he left no will and the ownership of all his properties were transferred to his son from his first marriage, leaving his second wife and surviving daughter in the lurch. It was her educated mother and enterprising grandmother who left the deepest impression on her mind. It was from them that she inherited her independent streak and a lifelong love for books. In 1917, 14-year-old Kamaladevi was married off but her husband died within a year of the marriage, leaving her a widow.

In 1923, Kamaladevi was still in London when she heard of Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement. She promptly returned to India, enrolled herself in the Indian National Congress and joined Seva Dal (a Gandhian organisation that worked towards social upliftment of the poor). Her dedication saw her soon being put in charge of the organisation's women's department that recruited and trained women of all ages across India to become voluntary workers. Three years later, Kamaladevi earned the unique distinction of becoming the first woman in India to run for political office. Inspired by Irish-Indian suffragette Margaret Cousins, the founder of All India Women's Conference (AIWC), she competed for a seat in the Madras Legislative Assembly and lost by a mere 55 votes.

Impact/area of work : She worked hard for the prevention of child marriage and emphasised on the need to consider women's unpaid household labour an economic activity. By campaigning for improving the quality of women's education, she also planted the seed for what later became the Lady Irwin College in New Delhi.