

Sayfty Gender Sensitization Training

Rebel Books Campaign

Training Evaluation Report



Educate. Empower.

20 July 2018

Executive Summary

From the years 2007-2016, gender-based violence rose 83% in India.¹ In 2016, there were over 125,000 reported instances of sexual assault and over 27,000 cases of sexual harassment. There were over 33,000 cases of kidnapping a woman to force her into marriage. There were nearly 39,000 reported cases of rape, including gang rape and custodial rape. These numbers are largely under representative of the volume of sexual violence against women in India. With two-thirds of the country living in rural communities where patriarchal systems are the strongest, most crimes of sexual violence and sexual harassment go unreported and are simply accepted as a way of life.

Economist Amartya Sen estimated that more than one hundred million women were missing, not only because of female infanticide in the underdeveloped world, but also because of the large disparity in resources for health, nutrition, economics, and education between male and female children. He wrote, “We confront here what is clearly one of the more momentous, and neglected, problems facing the world today.”² Sen wrote this in 1990. Nearly twenty years later, women are no better off in the global south, where gender stereotypes are widely viewed as biological truths, and where the dominance of patriarchy continues to result in violence against women.

Sayfty believes that the root cause of gender-based violence is the acceptance of gender stereotypes and the widespread ideas that women less worthy than men to be educated and be empowered to determine their own futures. To address this root cause and contribute to SDG Goal 5, Sayfty piloted the [Rebel Books Campaign](#), which teaches books about female experiences and feature female main characters. This was paired with gender sensitization training in June/July 2018 at Pardada Pardadi Educational Society in Anupshahr, Uttar Pradesh with 55 students in four batches. The book chosen for the campaign was “*I Need to Pee*”, written by Neha Singh. This book was chosen over others because it calls attention to a female-shared experience in India and attempts to connect female empowerment with bodily integrity. After reading and discussing the book, students wrote book reports and a gender sensitivity training session was held in order to teach girls about gender stereotypes and how they affect people in society, as well as the concept of female empowerment.

The following report explains the background and goals of the campaign, summarizes the discussions held during the gender sensitization training, and assesses the effectiveness of the campaign based on pre and post reading surveys of the concepts in the training. Based on the conclusions from the campaign, possible adaptations for different audiences are also included.

¹ National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs: Crime in India 2016: Statistics

² Sen, Amartya. More Than 100 Million Women are Missing. New York Review of Books. 1990

Section 1.0: Campaign Overview

1.1 Background and Objectives

Children are impressionable and begin learning from a very young age. For centuries, through books, we have been telling the same stories about a prince charming saving a damsel in distress thereby reinforcing the concepts of masculinity and femininity from an early age. Children begin to form opinions and act upon things they see and learn from, so the books they read influence their futures. The Rebel Books Campaign encourages the community to read books that defy gender stereotypes so that girls will grow up feeling empowered and equal to boys rather than viewing themselves as the lesser sex.

Sayfty partnered with Pardada Pardadi Educational Society in Anupshahr, Uttar Pradesh to reach female students that come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The mission of Pardada Pardadi is ‘Rural Development through education, employment, and empowerment of rural girls and women’ in a region of India where statistics for girls are particularly alarming. In Uttar Pradesh, over half of female students drop out before completing grade 8 due to lack of toilets, marriage (72% of girls are engaged or married by age 15), or to work in fields.³ In Bulandshahr, the region within Uttar Pradesh that Anupshahr is located, only 55% of females can read and 47% can subtract.⁴ Because of this large educational gap, children in rural settings do not have exposure to women in empowered roles in their daily lives. This reinforces the gender stereotypes they are being taught in their communities.

The objectives of the campaign include:

- Raising awareness about children’s books that address gender stereotypes and female-shared experiences
- Creating a resource page of inspirational books for parents and teachers to use to teach children about gender equality from a young age
- To evaluate the effect of reading a #RebelBook to children, thereby also contributing to the SDG goals of education (SDG4) and gender equality (SDG5)
- To educate and empower the next generation of students.

1.2 Campaign Materials

- **Rebel Book:** I Need to Pee, by Neha Singh
- **Pre and Post-Reading Surveys:** Each student completed a short survey before reading, asking them to identify gender stereotypes in a list, to choose the definition of empowerment, and to name books with female main characters and women in society who are empowered. The same survey was given after the gender sensitization training to assess their learning of the concepts.
- **Gender Sensitization Training Presentation:** The concepts of gender stereotypes and empowerment discussed in words and pictures

³ <https://www.education4change.org/aboutUs/page/1>

⁴ Ibid.

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Section 2.0: Rebel Book Discussion: Day 1

Before starting, each girl was given a short survey (attached in the appendix) asking her to identify gender stereotypes and to name empowered women and books that have female main characters. After the pre-reading survey was completed, each girl received a copy of the book *I Need to Pee* to follow along as a teacher read the book aloud. After the first reading, unfamiliar words and concepts were discussed with the class and each girl spend time re-reading the book again on her own. After reading, the students wrote a book review, discussing specifically what the main idea was of the story, if any situations in the book had ever happened to them, and what their feelings were on the topic (examples in Appendix III). Each girl read her book report aloud and the group discussed the shared experience of feeling nervous or afraid to ask to use the washroom on buses and in public, and how it is more difficult for females to find a proper toilet to use. This discussion highlights the biological differences between males and females, and also brings to light social/cultural attitudes about the female body and the difference in male and female empowerment.

2.1 Book Review Exercise Analysis

Three questions were used to guide students in writing their book reviews:

- What is the main idea of the story?
- Has anything in the story happened to you?
- How do you feel about what the story is talking about?

All of the students reported liking the story and thinking that it was an important topic to talk about. Most of the students expressed that they had experienced a long bus journey or time in public when they needed to use the toilet and had difficulty either expressing their needs or finding a suitable toilet to use. Some girls said that they had never experienced feeling shy or nervous when asking to use the toilet. While it is possible that this could be true, it is also possible that because any topic related to women's health or women's bodies is mostly not discussed, and the students may not have been comfortable sharing these types of experiences in a classroom setting. It is also possible that the students, some of which do not have toilets in their own homes, do not think they are entitled to have a safe and clean toilet. Having said this, all students identified with dirty or complete lack of facilities.

The students also understood that there is a different shared toilet experience for males and females. It is very common in India to see men urinating in public, so it has become a shared experience for everyone, male and female to witness this. While all the students had witnessed this personally, many of them had never asked why men were not also shy about asking to use the bathroom or urinating in public.

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Section 3.0: Gender Sensitization Training: Day 2

Gender Sensitization training began with defining ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ and discussing the differences between them. This led to a discussion about what words/activities/traits are associated with men/boys and women/girls. The group together identified these words and categorized them. The word ‘stereotype’ was defined and the examples the group brainstormed were used for this discussion. Each word was then associated with ‘positive trait’ or ‘negative trait’. The group discussed how stereotypes affect the daily lives of each person in the areas of education, activities, career, and the future and how people are treated differently in their communities or in their families because of their gender. The concept of ‘empowerment’ was defined and the group brainstormed words/traits associated with empowerment, concluding with examples of empowered women in public life. When the training finished, the same survey taken before reading was given to assess the students’ learning of the concepts.

Section 4.0: Training Assessment, Obstacles, and Conclusion

After gender sensitization training concluded, the same pre-reading survey was given to each student to assess their learning of the concepts.

4.1 Pre/Post Reading Survey Results

Batch	Pre-Reading			Post Reading		
	Knowledge of what a stereotype is (self-reported)	Ability to identify stereotypes from a list	Identify the correct definition of empowerment	Knowledge of what a stereotype is (self-reported)	Ability to identify stereotypes from a list	Identify the correct definition of empowerment
1	20%	20%	100%	100%	69%	100%
2	6%	6%	100%	87%	56%	100%
3	62%	18%	100%	100%	69%	100%
4	80%	60%	100%	100%	90%	100%

*A total of 55 students participated in four batches

4.2 Results Analysis

The self-reported knowledge of what a gender stereotype is dramatically increased after gender sensitization training, but the percentage of girls who correctly identified gender stereotypes from a list was lower than that of their self-reported knowledge of knowing what a stereotype was. In a list of four items, three were gender stereotypes including:

- Boys wear blue and girls wear pink
- Boys don’t cry
- Girls are not strong

The vast majority of participants that correctly identified a gender stereotype only identified one on this list, not all three, and the overwhelming majority chose ‘Boys wear blue and girls wear pink’. Possibilities accounting for the difference between self-reported knowledge of what a stereotype is and being able to

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correctly identify could be the desire to answer ‘Yes’ I know instead of ‘No’, I don’t know. This indicates that students may feel pressure to be correct all the time, are afraid of making mistakes, or feel like it’s a negative thing to admit they don’t know something. This can possibly be linked to the socialization of girls, where they are often hesitant to voice opinions or take risks in asking questions or admitting they don’t understand. Boys are often encouraged by educators and family members to be ‘explorers’ and to have more self-confidence, whereas girls are taught to be quiet and listen, and in a rural Indian context, they are discouraged from exploration on their own.

Every girl participating in the campaign reported to know what empowerment meant and could correctly identify it in a list of definitions. This is due to the fact that Pardada Pardadi Educational Society was founded and operates on the belief that all girls and women should be empowered, and the word ‘empowerment’ is written on the walls along with pictures and stories of empowered women. This is a strong value taught in this school. However, when asked to identify a book with a female main character or an empowered woman, there were very few variations in answers. The majority listed Malala Yousafzai both for the book and the empowered woman. This indicates that although they know what empowerment means, and although the educational institution they attend teaches this, they are not able to identify many women that they know of who are empowered. This could be due to the fact that the girls come from disadvantaged socioeconomic positions and do not have access to media or contact with women who are leading different kinds of lives. This is also a symptom of larger cultural norms.

4.3 Obstacles

- **Language Barrier**

There were a few challenges during the campaign, the largest being a language barrier. The English language skills decreased with each batch, the first batch being the most proficient and able to express their ideas in book reviews and verbally. The first batch of students was also the oldest and had the highest English proficiency, which made it easier for them to communicate ideas and to write their book reports. Each batch after was a mix of students, the youngest being 14, who had less English proficiency, making it more difficult for them to express their thoughts. This may have been a barrier to learning the concepts and fully grasping the content of the book.

- **Concept Understanding**

Due to language barrier, the concept of bodily integrity and the link between stereotypes and empowerment may have been difficult to understand, and the link from these concepts to the book might have been difficult, especially paired with a language barrier. In a larger cultural context, it is radical to speak openly about a female bodily experience and to openly question gender stereotypes, especially for girls who come from rural and disadvantaged backgrounds. Gender stereotypes are complex concepts that are not regularly taught in schools, and even adults have a difficult time accepting that gender stereotypes are just stereotypes. Gender norms are so deeply rooted in the collective psyche that they go unchallenged. The concept of true empowerment and bodily integrity are particularly difficult to teach when students have very few, if any, real life examples of women who are empowered to choose their own futures.

- **Attendance Consistency**

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Due to other special events at the school and other commitments that various students had, there were several instances of some students attending only one half of the training. This means that in some cases there were students present in the first half, but did not come for the second or new students who came for the second, but were not present for the book reading.

4.4 Conclusion

Identifying and discussing gender stereotypes and empowerment can mean a different future for girls. In order to change cultural attitudes toward girls and women, we must start to raise children differently. We need to educate them about the social constructs that divide us and damage us, and in so doing, strive to create a more just and safer society.

The Rebel Books campaign successfully introduced a female-centered book that all the participants could identify with in one way or another in their own lives. Access to safe public toilets and exerting ones right to use the toilet whenever needed was a subject not talked about before. It caused the girls to think about their own experiences and question what is ‘normal’ and why they should feel ashamed or nervous when it comes to natural bodily functions. Through open conversations we were able to highlight the struggle faced in our society with limited suitable facilities for girls and women. Although the girls may not have linked bodily integrity to empowerment, they were clear on the fact that this is shared female experience.

The gender sensitization training was successful in teaching the participants about stereotypes, although there was still a gap in being able to identify specific gender stereotypes on the post-reading assessment. This was the most basic training on gender and empowerment, but now that the concepts have been named and discussed, the girls seem confident in knowing that they can be empowered and choose their own futures. One student in the last batch asked if we can change stereotypes and another student answered, “With our thoughts.” This is a positive step forward.

The Rebel Books Campaign can be replicated in any school or community setting, with both boys and girls. It contributes towards achieving both SDG 4 (education) and SDG 5 (gender equality). The campaign doesn’t have to be restricted to disadvantaged children only. It is important for children to read books that are about the experiences of girls and women to bring them out of the margins. The Rebel Book can be changed to suit the audience’s language level and age group as necessary. Reading books that challenge gender stereotypes are a good first stepping stone to gender sensitization. Gender stereotypes are present in all sectors of society, in all parts of the world. The more they are talked about and questioned, the closer we get to addressing them to create safer, more socially just societies.

Acknowledgements

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Special thanks to the students of Pardada Pardadi for sharing their experiences and being open to discussing difficult concepts. This pilot would not have been possible without the generous donation of our well-wisher Mr. Jacob. You walk over and under and around obstacles each day in the path to your empowerment and that makes you truly amazing young women. You are the heroes.

About Sayfty

Sayfty is an Indian non-profit organization whose mission is to educate and empower young women and girls against gender-based violence. Sayfty's vision is to make the daily lives of millions of women and girls safer by empowering them to take a stance against gender violence. A woman's safety is her birthright and our programs and initiatives ensure that she feels safe and free from violence.

We educate women and girls about the issue of violence against women by using digital media, storytelling and gender role discussions. Our online campaigns empower women and girls by making them more aware of their rights, helping them identify and speak out against gender violence. We provide safe spaces (online and offline) for open conversations with boys and men to bring about a fundamental shift in how violence against women is perceived.

Our self-defense workshops, gender sensitization trainings and children's workshops instill confidence in women and girls to protect themselves while encountering perpetrators.

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Appendix I



Feedback Questions (Pre book reading)

Date: _____ Full Name: _____

1. What is your gender (circle one)? Male / Female
2. What is your age? _____ -
3. Do you understand what gender stereotype means (select one)? Yes / No
4. Which of these is an example of gender stereotype (select all that apply)
 - a. Boys wear blue color and girls wear pink colors
 - b. Boys don't cry
 - c. Girls are not strong
 - d. Education is good for all
5. Name a story book in which the girl is the main character?
_____ -
6. The word 'Empowered' means? (Pick One)
 - a. The authority or power to do something
 - b. I don't know
 - c. Not powerful
7. A Girl can be the hero of a story? Yes / No
8. Name one girl/woman who is empowered? _____


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Appendix II



Feedback Questions (Post book reading)

Date: 20/6/2018 Full Name: [REDACTED]

1. What is your gender (circle one)? Male / ☒ Female

2. What is your age? 17 -

3. Do you understand what gender stereotype means (select one)? ☒ Yes / No

4. Which of these is an example of gender stereotype (select all that apply)

- ☒ a. Boys wear blue color and girls wear pink colors
- ☒ b. Boys don't cry
- ☒ c. Girls are not strong
- d. Education is good for all

5. Name a story book in which the girl is the main character?

Malala -

6. The word 'Empowered' means? (Pick One)


- ☒ a. The authority or power to do something
- b. I don't know
- c. Not powerful

7. A Girl can be the hero of a story? ☒ Yes / No

8. Name one girl/woman who is empowered? Mery com

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Feedback Questions (Post book reading)

Date: 20/06/2018 Full Name: [REDACTED]

1. What is your gender (circle one)? Male / Female

2. What is your age? 18 -

3. Do you understand what gender stereotype means (select one)? Yes No

4. Which of these is an example of gender stereotype (select all that apply)

- ☒ a. Boys wear blue color and girls wear pink colors
- ☒ b. Boys don't cry
- ☒ c. Girls are not strong
- d. Education is good for all

5. Name a story book in which the girl is the main character?

MALALA'S STORY -

6. The word 'Empowered' means? (Pick One)

- ☒ a. The authority or power to do something
- b. I don't know
- c. Not powerful

7. A Girl can be the hero of a story? ☒ Yes / No

8. Name one girl/woman who is empowered? Indira Gandhi

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Appendix III

Name- [REDACTED] Date- 19th June-2018

→ What are your thought about the book?

I think about it that this book ~~are~~^{is} helpful for us. Because When I read this book I saw many things in it which things face many girls & Womans. In this story ~~the~~ Rahi Show girls and children rights and our duties. If Replace of Rahi, who girls feel shy. So In this soday she had many problems. And She didnot tell that problem anyone. So I think about story that Rahi Show ~~over~~ her rights and she take benefit it. If A Girl face these problems So she should spoke about these problems.

→ What is the main idea of the story?

After reading this story I think that it story purpose that Like Rahi, Every Girls fight for rights. Because When we fight for it ~~then~~ we got ^{her} our rights. Main idea of this story ~~is~~ that more people face this Problem.

→ Has anything in the story happened to you?

No.

→ What are your fella feeling about this topic?

My fella fel feeling about this topic that it topic for worried. So In terrains toilets are wets and

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Name : [REDACTED]

① What are your thoughts about the book?

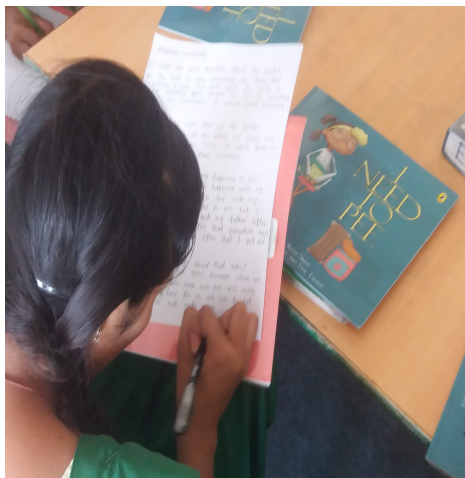
In this book ~~about~~ have a toilet problem. It's is also problem in India. In India train Bus have this type problem. For woman this Indian woman so worried to travel in train and Rural area. This book told about the problem in traveling. It is also in problem our life. When we travel in train there toilet are not good and clean. And No door + lock. In that case who woman travel in train.

② What is the main idea of the story?

In this story have main idea is this. In woman life have so Important part in journey so in that case woman may need toilet. In this book toilet is Important in woman life.

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Que:- What are your feelings about this topic?
Ans My feelings is that topic is good to
feelings others. ~~beca~~ because some people
or and children shy. so I am saying because
I see in my class. When Male Teacher
teach as girls shy to ask teacher.



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Sen, A. (1990). More Than 100 Million Women are Missing. *The New York Review of Books*. Retrieved from <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1990/12/20/more-than-100-million-women-are-missing/>

Let's reposition the photos to include it in the main text. I will send the ones to be included in the report. We need high quality photos.