PART-A

Answer the following in 200 words each.


**Ans:** On 18 December 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. It entered into force as an international treaty on 3 September 1981 after the twentieth country had ratified it. By the tenth anniversary of the Convention in 1989, almost one hundred nations have agreed to be bound by its provisions. The Convention was the culmination of more than thirty years of work by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, a body established in 1946 to monitor the situation of women and to promote women's rights. The Commission's work has been instrumental in bringing to light all the areas in which women are denied equality with men. These efforts for the advancement of women have resulted in several declarations and conventions, of which the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is the central and most comprehensive document. Among the international human rights treaties, the Convention takes an important place in bringing the female half of humanity into the focus of human rights concerns. The spirit of the Convention is rooted in the goals of the United Nations: to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity, and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women. The present document spells out the meaning of equality and how it can be achieved. In so doing, the Convention establishes not only an international bill of rights for women, but also an agenda for action by countries to guarantee the enjoyment of those rights.

2. Analyze the various forms of strategies to bring gender equity in education.

**Ans:** Education of women has been justified in the interests of supplementary income generation, lower fertility rates and population control, better mothering skills, upholding “tradition” and spiritual values, and improving social cohesion. Most of these interests address women as instruments for upkeep of the family and society, sacrificing or ignoring their very identity and rights as individual human beings. The paradox here is that education, which has been a site for the reproduction of social values and stereotypes which bind and constrain, is also potentially a site for empowerment. Moreover, the State and other agencies who “shape” and transmit education through curriculum and pedagogy are also caught in this paradox. On the one hand, they become instrumental in reinforcing subordination and perpetuate the status-quo and on the other, take on a progressive mantle. The contradictions and tensions that this situation produces is then replicated in the contradictory messages inherent in the construction of knowledge in textbooks too. It is very often observed that the same textbook can show women as equal in one lesson, and mock women in another. If education policy is committed to gender equality then this contradiction needs to be addressed, and the development of unambiguously progressive perspectives, in the very construction of knowledge must be acknowledged as a focus of transformation. The curriculum’s presentation of gender relations is frequently based upon popular assumptions or upon ideas perpetuated by dominant groups. And it normally posits the male as the normative epistemic subject. It rarely considers the differentiated contributions, capacities and perspectives of women. Alternative Gendered Frameworks of Knowledge require equal reflection of the worlds of both men and women and carry within them the seeds of a just social transformation.

**Addressing the Hidden Curriculum**

The Hidden Curriculum implies, organizational arrangements, including, rituals and practices in everyday school life like segregated seating, separate lines for girls and boys, or having them form separate teams, differential task assignment and sexual division of labour in school like boys allowed to go out of school, girls sweep, clean, serve water, present bouquet in functions, systems of rewards and punishments, disciplining of boys and girls through different strategies, teacher’s labeling patterns, teacher-student and student-student interactions. Also teaching and learning materials, classroom practices, evaluation and assessment procedures and language policy are all components of curriculum ‘learned’ in school. It demands investigation of the contexts within which the children make meaning of, or respond to, these notions, through the filter of her/his subjective experience while growing up as female/male in society. While it is important to understand, the ideologies underlying the presentation of gender in school textbooks, it is equally pertinent to examine how these ideologies are expressed at the level of everyday school practices, experiences and pedagogic practices.

**Teacher as Facilitator**

Feminist pedagogy emphasizes participatory learning and teaching, within which subjectivity, emotion and experience have a definite and valued place. While participation is a powerful strategy, its pedagogic edge is blunted when it is ritualized. Participation, when seen as an instrument to achieve certain specified, predetermined objectives and where the teacher’s own ideas dominate classroom discussions is not meaningful. It involves appreciation of the importance of starting from experience of both students and teachers. The curriculum also must accommodate pedagogic strategies that deal with the idea of conflict, between what is observed and valued in contemporary society, in the social worlds that children inhabit, and what can be in a genderjust and less violent world. To use conflict as a pedagogic strategy is to enable children to deal with conflict and facilitate awareness of its nature and role in their lives. If children’s social experiences are to be brought into classrooms, it is inevitable that issues of conflict must be addressed. Conflict is an inescapable part of children’s lives. They constantly encounter situations which call for moral assessment and action, whether in relation to subjective experiences of conflict involving the self, family and society, or in dealing with exposure to violent conflict in the contemporary world. Yet the official curriculum tends to treat knowledge as neutral, erasing conflict to legitimize a certain vision.