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# Meena Ki Duniya – Radio Programme

## Teacher's Guide

(For Standard 6, 7 & 8)





## Preface

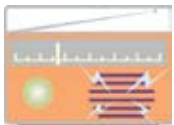
Radio is a popular, low cost media which can be used to educate and teach school children in an entertaining manner. 'Meena Ki Duniya', radio programme has especially been developed for junior high school students. This programme is promoted through the Government of Uttar Pradesh's Education department with support from UNICEF.

UNICEF initiated the first steps of 'Meena' in the 1990s to increase awareness about child rights and improve gender equality between boys and girls. Meena's popularity in Uttar Pradesh took to new heights in 2002 when the State Education Department established 36,022 '*Meena Manches*' in higher primary schools. Each and every Meena story besides being entertaining and interesting includes issues of child rights, gender equality and child-friendly schools.

Every episode of 'Meena Ki Duniya' is 15 minutes long and altogether there are 160 episodes in the series which is broadcast by *All India Radio* from Monday-to-Saturday (except Sunday) between 12:30–12:45 in the afternoon.

We hope that 'Meena Ki Duniya' programme reaches new heights of success and the future citizens of our country will be completely aware of their rights and also be responsible to their duties.

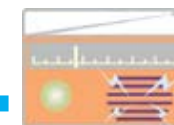
With best wishes, we also invite your constructive suggestions.





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## Section I



## Introduction

### The Teacher's Guide

The guide is developed to help teachers like you know about the Meena Radio Initiative.

The idea is to make learning interactive so that students can recall and share the Meena radio programme messages with family and friends.

Through the programmes, you can also motivate attitudinal change in parents and community members towards children especially the girl child.

### How to use the Teacher's Guide

The guide helps you understand your roles and responsibilities before, during and after the radio programme 'Meena Ki Duniya' is broadcast.

These guidelines support discussions and doable activities on various issues from the Meena radio programmes.

The information provided is simple and easy to achieve.

As a teacher, you should familiarize yourself with the content and examples provided and prepare yourself for the actual radio session i.e. how will you teach the Meena stories? What kind of questions and types of activities will you undertake with your students?

Extract from your own experience as a teacher to adapt or add to the information provided here.

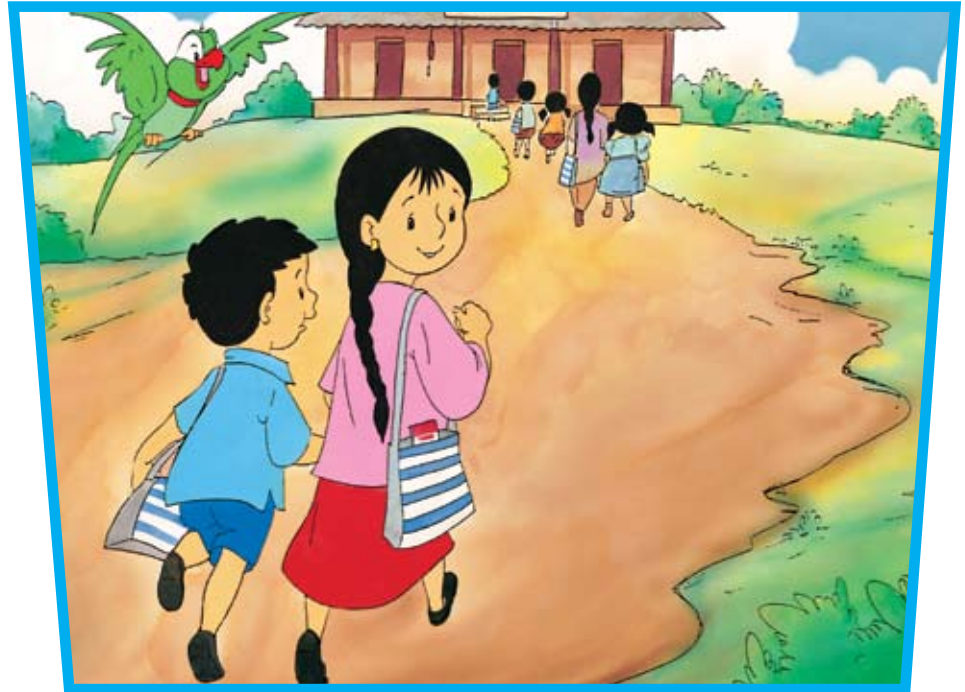


## Meena Manch – Inception/Background

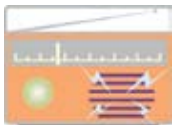
The prosperity of any country depends on its education level and the capabilities of its people. After independence, our country tried very hard to spread education in all directions, however, even today in India, the overall literacy rate is 65.38%, and of this, woman literacy is only 57.36%. This is because even now there are several obstacles on the road towards girl child education, for examples:

### Obstacles in Girl Childrens Education

- Gender Discrimination
- Orthodox Tradition
- Child Marriage
- Burden of Household Work
- Basic Shy Nature of Girls
- Less Encouragement
- Feeling of Lack of Security
- A Big Family



To eliminate all these obstacles with solutions and to increase the number of girl children enrolment and their continuous attendance, the district primary education programme initiated the 'Meena Campaign'. Through this,





'Meena' was also discussed with the community. However, the realization soon came that if there has to be complete girl child empowerment; we have to first change peoples' attitude towards gender discrimination and their perception towards the girl child altogether. Supporting this, it was also felt that it would be more effective to discuss these issues with the girls directly. With this objective in mind, higher primary schools decided to form 'Girl Groups' or 'Meena Manches'.

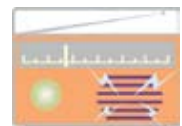
**Meena Manches – Its Basis:** The 'Meena Manch' is a group meant for girls between the ages of 11–18 years, those who attend school and do not attend school and it offers them an opportunity to express themselves.

### Executive Body

1. Head
2. Assistant Head
3. Manager-Accountant
4. Motivator Member
5. Active Member

### Several Committees of 'Meena Manches'

1. Discipline Committee
2. Cleanliness Committee
3. Prayer Committee
4. Library Committee
5. Cultural Committee







## The Objective of 'Meena Manches'

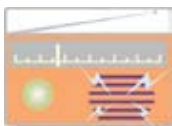
- ★ To increase the capacity to express themselves.
- ★ To increase the awareness of girls towards health and cleanliness.
- ★ To promote Life Skills Learning in girls.
- ★ To mainstream education for girls.
- ★ To promote leadership qualities in girls.
- ★ To create awareness amongst the girls about their own rights.
- ★ To make girls aware of their responsibilities.



**The History of Meena Manches:** In the beginning, there were 700 Meena Manches created for every 10 populous areas. Every *Manch* received a set of Meena stories, and through this their involvement increased in school and local village level activities. In the past, there were 36,022 *Meena Manches* in Uttar Pradesh and each group had a kit. To provide them better cooperation, teachers were trained. This year, the target is to form 5,766 new *Meena Manches*.

They were all provided Meena kits. Each and every Meena story is entertaining, humourous and has a social message on problems and issues concerning children like education, gender equality, nutrition, health care.

In the process of learning about Meena, children have become more confident and increased their capacity to find solutions to difficult problems, several ways to express themselves and also overcome obstacles. Meena is their role-model.







## The Meena Communication Initiative

UNICEF's **Meena Communication Initiative** was developed in the 1990s to increase awareness about child rights and improve gender equality between boys and girls.

Meena's popularity in Uttar Pradesh took to new heights in 2002 when the State Education Department established more than 19,000 '*Meena Manches*' to promote education. In the past, there has been a total of 36,022 *Meena Manches*.

### Who is Meena?

Meena is a nine year old girl, who lives with her parents, grandmother, younger brother, Raju and baby sister Rani in a village.

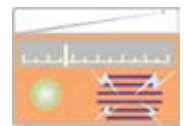
Meena is enthusiastic, happy, sympathetic and always ready to help.

Her best friend is Mithu, her pet parrot and partner in all her adventures.

Meena is just like any other girl but special in certain ways. She is not afraid to ask questions and speaks up for the meek. Meena is sensitive to the needs of others and tries to help her family and friends to find solutions to their problems.

Meena is a very lovable character, everyone's favourite. Where ever Meena goes, people accept welcome her with open hearts.

Meena is eager to come to your school and live with you and your friends.





## The Meena Radio Initiative

Radio is an inexpensive, popular and effective medium to reach and provide school children entertainment, information and knowledge.

'Meena ki Duniya' radio programme has specially been created for school children.

This programme is being promoted through the Government of Uttar Pradesh's Education department with support of UNICEF.

Each episode of 'Meena Ki Duniya' is 15-minutes long and is broadcast live from Monday-to-Saturday by *All India Radio*.

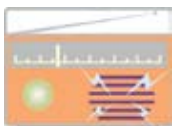
All Government schools have set aside a fixed period in their timetable so that children can listen to the programme and discuss it.

The *Primary Audience* for the programme is school boys and girls in the age group of 11–14 years from upper primary (elementary school) i.e. class 6–8.

The *Secondary Audience* includes teachers like you, parents and community members such as school administrators, *Shiksha Mitra*, community leaders like *panchayat pradhan* etc.

## Objectives of 'Meena Ki Duniya'

'Meena Ki Duniya' is meant to empower children, especially girls, to build their self-esteem so that they can help themselves and others. E.g. in '*Meena Manches*', older girl members ensure enrolment and attendance of younger girl children.



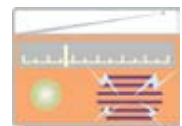


The content of the radio programme focuses on three core themes – Child Rights, Gender Equity and Child Friendly Schools.

- ★ **Child Rights:** All children have basic rights to grow and develop to the fullest e.g. right to survival, development, growth and protection.
- ★ **Gender Equity:** Between boys and girls relating to education, proper nutrition, sharing of work, playing etc.
- ★ **Child Friendly Schools:** Create a nurturing environment to look after a child's health, safety, nutrition status and psychological well-being.

The Meena stories are such that they inspire children to solve problems, take decisions through critical thinking; enhance communication, negotiation, coping with emotions and stress, self-assessment, conflict resolution and management, and build relationship skills such as empathy.

*(More details on these 'life skills' are given in the annexure)*





### Broadcast of 'Meena Ki Duniya'

This section provides basic information on the roles and responsibilities of the teacher (you) before, during and after the Meena radio episode is broadcast.

#### Overall Structure of the Meena Radio Programme

Each episode of 'Meena Ki Duniya' has 3 permanent segments linked together by the anchor's commentary (sutradhar):

- Segment 1 relates to a Meena story.
- Segment 2 has a hummable song.
- Segment 3 is activity based with either a puzzle, quiz or game.

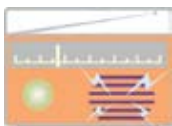
Care has been taken to ensure that the theme covered in the story is also continued in the song and game for the particular episode i.e. in all three segments.

If you have 40-minutes for the 'Meena Ki Duniya' period, it can be divided as:

- 5-minutes to setting-up the classroom and getting the students ready
- 15-minutes for listening to the radio episode
- 20-minutes for interactions and discussions with students

#### Things to do before the Radio Broadcast (5 Minutes)

Listening does not mean just hearing words. Students require concentration and alertness to understand what they hear. This is possible if the classroom environment supports it. As a teacher, you can do the following to set up an environment for listening.





## 1. Oversee the Classroom Logistics/Setting-up

You can delegate responsibilities to your students

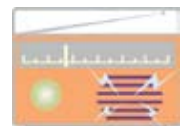
- ◆ For safe keeping of the radio set and its maintenance. If needed, a supply of batteries. It is a good idea to keep an inventory for batteries.
- ◆ Arrange a suitable location like a table and check the power or battery connections of the radio set.
- ◆ Tune in to the correct frequency of All India Radio to hear 'Meena ki Duniya'.
- ◆ Fix the sound levels and check its clarity with others.



- ◆ If necessary, re-arrange the classroom to make space for seating in front of the radio set.
- ◆ To reduce the noise, close the door and windows but make sure that the classroom is not dark and unventilated.
- ◆ Keep materials like paper, crayons, pictures etc. ready for planned activities.

## 2. Prepare your Students for no Interruptions or Distractions

- ☐ Make a small group of listeners with at the most, 50 students.
- ☐ Ask students, who want to drink water or use the toilet facilities to do so beforehand.







□ Clearly explain what you expect from them such as discipline, listening, and contributing to discussions and activities (however, do not make it like a test.).

□ Clear all their doubts to prevent misunderstandings.

### 3. As a Teacher Support Recall of the Previous Episodes

★ This will help students stay connected and focused to the next stage.

★ Spend a minute to ask the class a few questions about the previous episode. E.g. "What was yesterday's Meena story about?" "What was the key message in the story?" "Did you discuss it at home?" "Now let's hear a new story from Meena and see what she has to tell us".

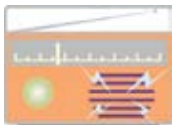


Listening to a radio programme builds a child's imagination as images replace the words they hear.

### Things to do During the Radio Broadcast (15 Minutes)

1. Both, you and your Students should Listen Attentively as the Live Broadcast is not Repeated

- Make notes of important messages, experiences, song tunes/lyrics or difficult words.
- You can even improvise questions and activities.





**E.g.** suppose a quiz says to name 3 things that help students learn; ask your students to add more items to this list.

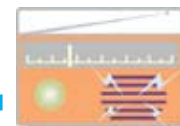
## 2. As a Teacher, you must Maintain Discipline and Attentiveness

- ❑ Even at this stage, keep observing your class and anticipate problems e.g. if two students are whispering, quietly separate them or make a disinterested student sit in front etc.
- ❑ Students also notice their teacher's behaviour, so be aware that your own body language (gestures, facial expressions, posture) is not negative (do not look disinterested, angry, inattentive etc.).

## Things to do after the Radio Broadcast (20 Minutes)

This is an interactive session to make learning interesting and fun! It also reinforces positive messages from Meena stories. Discussions and activities together help in promoting learning life skills.

As a teacher, you should have a rough session plan to include at least 5 minutes for question and answer of the Meena story segment, 7–8 minutes to discuss the key issue and messages from the story and remaining 6–7 minutes for an activity (song, game, or group work).







Students may not be learning if not mentally involved in the process so start with the following:

### 1. Encourage Questions for Comprehension and Understanding

- Begin by asking students to briefly narrate the story. To make it a little different, ask one student to start and others to continue and end it.
- Probe a bit more to find out about the story and its characters, E.g. "who do you like in the story and why?" "What does Meena do to help?" "What happens at the end" etc.
- Direct a few questions to the song and game such as whether they can recall a few lines or hum the song.

### 2. Follow this, with a Class Discussion on the Key Issue and its Messages from the Episode

- ◆ Begin by finding out what your students think and feel about the topic.
- ◆ "Do you think education is important?" "Do you think girls should be educated and why?" "Can you name 3 educated and famous people?" "Name your role model?" discuss and link their answer to bring out the importance of education.
- ◆ Try to emotionally connect the issues to their personal experiences. For instance, explore how education has helped them and their families? And relate it to how Meena was able to count (which she learnt at school) and catch Lala, the shopkeeper cheating Rano's father.





### 3. Encourage Students to Think Independently by not Providing Solutions

- You can ask your students to find their own method to resolve problems. E.g. give a few difficult situations where they have to think and find the solution such as your friend's sister wants to study: how can you help her? What would you do to convince her family?
- Another technique is to give 3 options to resolve a tricky situation by selecting the best answer with a reason. E.g.

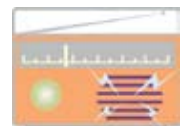
Amita's parents want her brothers to study because they:

- a. are smarter
  - b. can help the family
  - c. do not know about equal rights to education between boys and girls
- You can also promote debates in class. Divide the class into 2 groups, one for and one against an issue and have them debate on this. E.g. should girls stay in school or help the family at home.



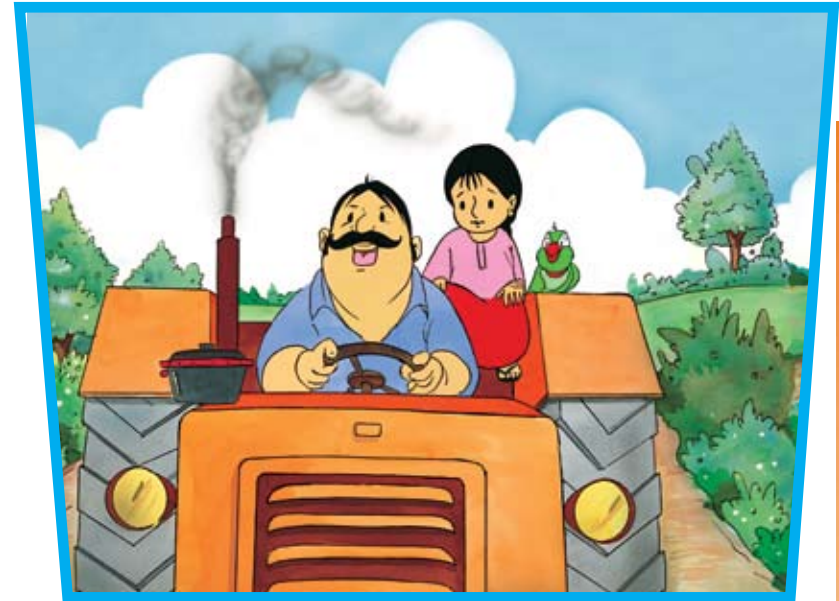
### 4. As a Teacher you can Help Students form Opinions

- ✂ Students like to have something to say so encourage them by listening and making them feel needed.



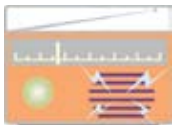


- ⌘ You should consider that children are different and accepting them encourages others to do the same. E.g. If a student says something which makes others laugh, hear what the child has to say and praise the attempt.
- ⌘ Observe how students participate and express themselves in class, you may find 2–3 students not involved or show signs of distress. Keep a note of this and if it happens consistently, the child needs your special support and attention.



## 5. Try and Encourage Children, who Speak Less or Hesitate in Class

- You as a class teacher can help shy children overcome their embarrassment by talking to them during class discussions: ask simple questions, ask them to read from a book or give small tasks to do like closing the doors, windows at the setting-up stage. If this does not help, try to find out the real reasons, sometime personal problems are also the cause.
- Do not label a child 'shy' in front of his or her friends as this will make them more embarrassed and withdrawn.
- Forcing a shy child into participation will not work either so encourage them gradually over a period of time until they gain self-confidence to take on bigger responsibilities.





- By making a shy student sit along side a student, who is empathetic and responsible can also help the child gain confidence through this interaction.

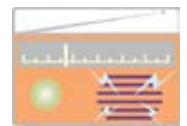
6. As a Teacher, you should Persuade Children to Discuss the Meena Radio Stories at Home

- Ask students to go home and narrate the Meena radio episodes with each and every family member. This helps to build the relationship between parents, siblings and grandparents also.

- To complete the exercise, they should discuss the issue with them, ask questions and hear their views. Over a period of time, these interactions can lead to a change in attitude and behaviour. E.g. Ask students to find out what their parents and grandparents feel about education for all? Do they feel girls benefit from education? Would your parents try to convince the neighbours if their child did not go to school?
- Let your students also know that they need to share their home experience with the class.
- Through this process, a child gains self-respect and confidence for being able to participate in his or her family interactions and decisions.

7. As a Teacher, you should Encourage Activities and Make Learning Interactive

- The use of debates, discussions, dramas, games, quiz, pictures, posters also stimulate children to think and work independently.



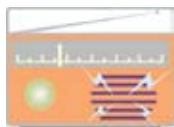


- You can find ways to help your students learn by experience of touch, sight, smell etc. For example, when discussing variety of flowers; an outdoor trip to the garden to see and touch the flowers will help students remember better. While discussing hand washing, a demonstration on how to wash hands with soap and water is a better way!
- Children like to be involved in their own learning. A lesson on gender equality can be more effective with a role-play situation like the one from 'Dividing the Mango' where Raju and Meena exchange work for the day.
- Make learning more appealing through drawings to cultivate imagination. E.g. Students can draw the part they liked in the radio programme (themes like friendship, child labour, or clean water etc.).
- Divide the class for group work and ask them to present in front of the class. The group work can involve visiting the ANM didi to learn about anaemia or visiting the AWW to find out about pre-school and why it is important to weigh children or even something like seeking information on child rights and child labour laws from the local Panchayat.

## Remember

Hum jo sunte hain, hamein uska kewal 20%  
yaad rehta hai. Hum jo dekhte hain uska 40%  
yaad rehataa hai. Lekin jo hum khud  
dhoondate hain, humein uska 80%  
yaad rehta hai.

We can remember only 20% of what heard, 40% of what is seen and heard but 80% of what we discover on our own.







## Tips to the Teachers

Talk to your students in the language they understand. Use examples, words and situations that they are familiar with.

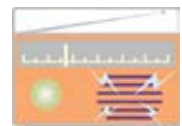
Try involving them in issues concerning their community, nation and the world around. E.g. explain why they need to save water by closing the water taps, hand pumps. Let them know how the lack of water is affecting the nation and even other countries.

You need to recognize the fact that students come from different backgrounds and their beliefs, attitudes, and biases also affect how they receive learning. As a teacher, you can build and add to these experiences and promote empathy. E.g. to create a feeling of acceptance of other faiths, you can discuss various religious festivals, customs and foods.

To be accepted by your students, you need to be approachable so as to understand their strengths and weaknesses and find ways to promote their self-confidence. E.g. Meena's teacher is liked and respected because she listens and helps them develop as individuals unlike Raju's teacher, who is strict.

While conducting class and interacting with your students, try to find ways to promote gender equality between boys and girls. E.g. do not make statements like boys are better in maths and sports than girls.

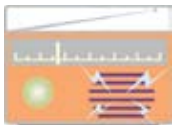
Teaching is an on-going and continuous process. It does not have to stop after the radio programme ends.





**For example:** everyone like Meena's teacher. She is respected by all, because she listens to all. She provides an opportunity to develop everyone's personality. However, Raju's teacher is not like her and is rude towards all children.

While teaching children in school, and during your interactions with them, always encourage gender equity in all issues. Do not make such statements like "boys are better than girls in sports and mathematics". Education is a continuous activity. End of the radio programme should not be the end of education. Please ensure that.







### Suggested Activities for Follow-up Action with Children

Teachers like you have a crucial role to play in ensuring that *Meena Manches* discuss the story issues at their weekly meetings and find innovative ways to talk with other students and their parents.

*Meena Manches* can narrate the stories to children they interact with and involve them in activities like games, role play etc. which they have learnt in class.

You can also nominate students and teachers, who promote Meena learning with certificates.

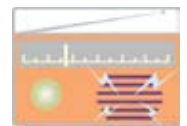
#### 1. Recall the Story with Family and Share it with the Class

As a daily exercise, you have already made students recall the Meena stories and discuss the issues with their families. After this, as a next step ask them to share what their families have said with the class. It can be an exciting way to share experiences.

#### 2. Information Seeking Activities Supported by you, the Teacher

This can be group work through which students can learn from each other, build on their leadership skills and become future role models for younger students.

Divide the class into small groups and ask them to make a 'map' of their village with the aim to find out important health facts about the sanitation areas like where is the toilet situated and where is the water tap and soap placed in all the houses?





This task can be developed in 2 ways:

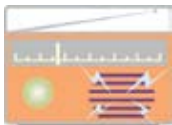
a. Investigate the reason why people do not wash their hands with soap before eating and after defecating by asking questions to every household. After analysis, students can find several reasons for this. It could be that there is no soap available or the water tap/bucket is far away from the toilet. In some cases, the families do not have a toilet at home and go out into the fields, so carrying soap is difficult.



b. Students interested in maths and numbers can make numerical calculation from the information collected such as the percentages of homes without a toilet, or those home which do not use soap and how many homes use both soap and water for hand washing before eating and after defecating.

These activities are interesting and novel:

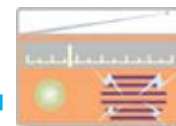
- Find out where important government facilities are situated in the village like Panchayat, Primary Health Centre, School, etc.
- How many hand pumps are there in the village and how many homes use clean water from these pumps.
- How many children are immunized and how many more need to complete their immunization.





## Suggested Activities for Follow-up Action with Parents and the Community

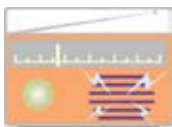
- ☞ During Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings, you can discuss topics from the Meena radio programme with parents (now that even their children tell them these stories).
- ☞ PTA meetings can be made motivational for parents by involving their children enacting a drama, or singing and dancing on themes from the radio programme.
- ☞ You can try to involve and encourage parents to take responsibilities during school functions – prize distribution day, drama, theme based days like a 'Meena Day' or 'Brother and Sister Day' to promote gender equality, 'Dadi-Nani Diwas' can be celebrated where grandparents can also be involved.
- ☞ You can help coordinate community based events like immunization camps, adult literacy classes etc with the involvement of parents, community members and other groups like radio listeners groups, Self-Help Groups, Mothers of *Meena Manches*.
- ☞ Village Education Committees (VEC) can play a major role in promoting Meena radio programmes and its activities with parents and the community. With your involvement, they can help mobilize the community to work together for a Meena cause by organizing awareness events.
- ☞ Work with your village Panchayat Committees to utilize themes from the radio programme to create a local campaign. For example, the hygiene and sanitation department can easily promote 'Meena' with the help





of school students to clean up an area or maybe create awareness on a cleanliness drive involving the entire community.

- ☞ Developing 'Child Friendly Panchayats' is another way of creating awareness about the Meena's issues.
- ☞ *Meena Manches*, adolescent girls groups, youth clubs etc. can take on the responsibility to organize street plays, *Meela melas* or events where community leaders are involved like planting saplings and taking care of trees.
- ☞ *Meena Manches* can talk about the new radio programme with the families they visit and use examples from the stories to discuss issues and help clear doubts. For instance, if parents want their daughter to help in the harvest, what solution can be provided to them to continue her education?
- ☞ *Meena Manches* can also promote listening of the radio programme in their *Mohallah* committees meetings. It is also an opportunity to discuss issues and try to resolve problems.





## Remember

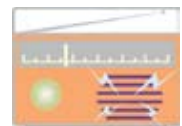
You as a teacher have a significant role during the Meena radio programme.

It is through your involvement in the process that success can be attained with children learning new things.

The Meena Radio Programme meant for both, boys and girls! They can learn valuable lessons and obtain information from the stories irrespective of gender.

Boys need to be sensitive and respectful towards issues concerning girls and this can be taught at an early age through the Meena radio programme.

You can create a supportive environment for change and also play the role of a leader by initiating parents and the community into the Meena radio programme.







# Important Life Skills Promoted Through Education

## Life Skills

**Creative Thinking:** Children, who solve problems by finding novel and out-of-the box solutions rather than old and repetitive way of thinking. E.g. Meena asks Mithu to help her learn what the teacher teaches in school and this was how she could catch the chicken thief.

**Critical Thinking:** It helps to analyse and understand situations and experiences in an objective manner.

**Coping with Emotions and Stress:** This skill helps a child find the reason for its stress, how it affects his/her mental and physical health and how to cope with it.

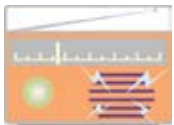
**Decision Making:** The child thinks up as many solutions and through a process, decides on the best solution to solve its problem.

**Effective Communication:** It helps children express themselves successfully verbally and non-verbally.

**Empathy:** It gives children the ability to image the life of someone else and accept those, who are different from them.

**Interpersonal Relations:** Children use this skill to comprehend how others behave so that they can have friendly relations with them.

**Negotiation:** This helps a child manage conflict and cooperate with others. It also involves a bit of give and take in any situation.





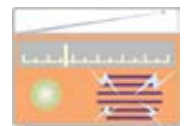
**Problem Solving:** When faced with a difficult situation, the child overcomes the several hurdles by choosing the best option, acting on it and reaching a solution.

**Self-awareness:** A child has true understanding of one's self: knowing one's character, strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes etc.

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**Suggestion:** A few exercises and stories have been presented as examples which can be used by teachers like you as a basis to formulate your own games and activities for the session after broadcast.

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# Social Awareness

## Game/Activity

All the participants have to stand in a circle, and the moderator asks various questions. If the answer is correct then the participant comes inside the circle. At the end, these questions can be discussed in detail.

## Types of Questions

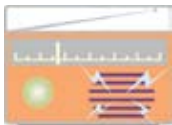
- i. Who has a younger brother/sister?
- ii. When ill, who visits a doctor to get treatment?
- iii. In whose house, do both, brother and sister help in the housework?
- iv. Who has traveled outside the village/Traveled by train?
- v. Who comes to school alone from the house/And also goes home alone from school?
- vi. Who has a toilet inside their house?
- vii. Who cooks or works at home and then comes to school?

## Child Marriage/Marriage at a Young Age

- i. What is the legal age of marriage and its significance?
- ii. If married at a young age, what can be the disadvantages of this?

## Child Marriage

Marriage is a social tradition wherein a man and woman, take on the role of a husband and wife. They take the responsibility to establish/form their family, manage the household expenses, take care of their children, and look after their elders etc.





In our country, the law governing marriage states that at the time of marriage the girl's age must be at least 18 years and the boy's age should be at least 21 years old. The reason for this is that the boy and girl should together be ready to handle their marriage related roles. The period before the legal age of marriage for any boy and girl should be spent in education, learning new skills, developing one's personality and distinguishing between right and wrong.

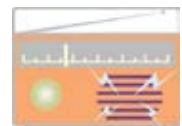
However, there are many people, who break this law and get adolescents married at a young age. In such a situation, the under aged husband-wife face several difficulties under the burden of responsibilities of married life.

For a young couple, there are several psychological difficulties to face such as:

**Poor Understanding of Day-to-Day/Routine Life:** To fulfill their responsibilities towards marriage, boys and girls are psychologically less prepared. Having poor understanding of routine married life and its experiences, they find it very difficult and stressful to take care of themselves and their children's needs.

**Poor Capabilities:** Their own capabilities are not fully developed as their education is incomplete and because of this, theirs and their children's lives are always enveloped in darkness. The boy has to take the responsibility of earning a living and looking after his wife and children while the girl has to run the household, have children and be involved in their upbringing.

Due to all these reasons, the husband-wife experience old age much before their time.





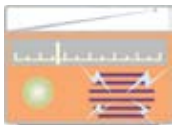
## There are Several Benefits of Getting Married after the Legal Age

- They can complete their education.
- They have more options for their livelihood.
- They are better equipped to manage their family and make better decisions.
- They are psychologically stronger and wiser to have better relationships as husband-wife and with the in-laws.
- The dangers of being a young adolescent mother is minimized.

## Child Marriage/Getting Married at a Young Age – Nasima and Aslam’s Story

Chetna in Lucknow district is small village and most of its inhabitants are from the 'Gadhi' community (Muslims). For many years, this community has been known to have an evil tradition of child marriages. Many parents arrange marriages of their unborn child. However in this situation if a different gender child is born then s/he is married off after 2–4 years while still sitting in their arms! If any parent objects, they were socially boycotted. Due to these child marriages, several problems develop like when a child dies, it is very difficult to get the other partner married again. Over a period of time, due to the efforts of education, awareness was created and several people spoke against this evil tradition and this effort was spearheaded by Shrimati Nasima.

Nasima's parents arranged her marriage to 4 year old to Aslam when she was 3 years old. Her 'Gauna' took place when she was 14 and immediately after a year, she gave birth to a premature baby girl. To save the child's life, they had to mortgage their land for the child's continuous treatment. Having no source of income, were forced into great financial hardships. Nasima, who was already unwell, became more ill. Aslam worked day and night in difficult circumstances to earn whatever little money he could for his family. He remained despondent most of the





time because the burden was too much to take at an early age. Many of his dreams remained unfulfilled—he wanted to study and become an engineer. He soon started thinking that he should not have agreed for the 'Gauna' so soon.

One day, unable to bear the pressure, a worried Aslam left home and never returned and Nasima was blamed for this misfortune and thrown out of the house by her in-laws. Abandoned, she turned to her parents, who were already weighed down with nine children and this incident added to their misery but they accepted her. Nasima also started working in the fields to support her family and during her free time, attended 'Adult Literacy' classes. Slowly, slowly

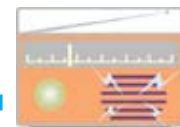
on her own capabilities she studied up to high school and took up the challenge to educate the community against the evils of child marriage. At first, they did not listen to her but overtime, they realised that children should be educated and girls should get married after 18 years and boys after 21 years.

As a result of this, many parents decided not to get their boy married until he was able to earn a livelihood and for the girl, marriage would be considered only after she is 18 years of age.

## Stories of Two Adolescent Girls

### Rama's Story

Rama stayed with her parents and six brothers and sisters in a village. Since childhood, her parents told her that she would be married off when she is 14–15 years old. As a result of this, she was asked to help



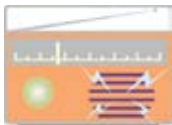


her mother with the household chores like cooking food and looking after her younger brothers and sisters. Rama never imagined that there could be another life outside, other than the world she lived in.

She married early and at 16, she became a mother of twins. Rama's husband is a fisherman and it was difficult to manage the family on his earnings. She did not want to live a life like this but at the same time, she did not know how to make her life better.

### Rashida's Story

Rama's friend, Rashida also lives in the same village with her parents and four brothers and sisters. Rashida's role model was her teacher, so it was her ambition to become one also. She worked very hard and obtained good marks in spite of all the difficulties. Her parents did not want her to continue her education but take on the housework instead. However, she found several ways to convince her parents to let her continue studying. First, she spoke with her aunt (father's sister), who's opinion was valued by her parents. In turn, her aunt spoke to her parents and explained the benefits of educating children especially girls. Secondly, after returning from school, she would finish her housework quickly and study late in the evening. Rashida married at 21 years. She now teaches at the same school, she studied at and is respected by many.



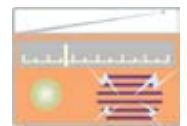




It is the aim for all adolescents to develop positive behaviours. However, to attain this, there are several problems as one can either go towards inactive (unresponsive) or overactive (aggressive) behaviours. To successfully, attain positive behaviour, one needs practice and patience and at the end of it, the result is very good.

### People, who Exhibit Positive Behaviours

- They express themselves with honesty.
- They try to attain their goals through their positive efforts.





- They do not try to intentionally harm or cause any loss to anybody.
- They allow others to follow their own path.
- They respect themselves and show respect to others also.
- They do not select something for others if they themselves do not like it.

Their way of thinking is "Live and let live".

How to express yourself clearly with confidence:

- How you feel, this should be conveyed clearly.
- If talking on a particular issue, keep it logical.
- Be more clear about your expectations/needs but at the same time, respect other people's feelings.

