

Area -4

Social Problems



Excesses In Life

(DRINKING HABIT)

OBJECTIVE To enable learners critically think and discuss ways to help reduce or stop the excess, with follow-up plans

Begin the session with a role play.

Tell the learners that you need 2 or 3 volunteers to perform a role play. Once the volunteers come forward, explain to them that they are to enact a couple of scenes to portray all that happens when a person gets home drunk. Encourage them to discuss and decide what are the various things they would depict and how would they go about enacting. Do not give suggestions. In case they do not perform well, ask a few other volunteers to perform.

After that ask the learners the following questions (encourage them to answer)

- What do you think of the scene enacted ?
- . Do such things happen in reality ?
- . Who are the ones that are affected/suffer ?
- . Is it possible to stop/reduce drinking ?

Those who drink certainly know that

- it is bad for health;
- it involves unnecessary expenditure;
- it puts others in difficulty.

drinking. drink. Each one has a reason(s)



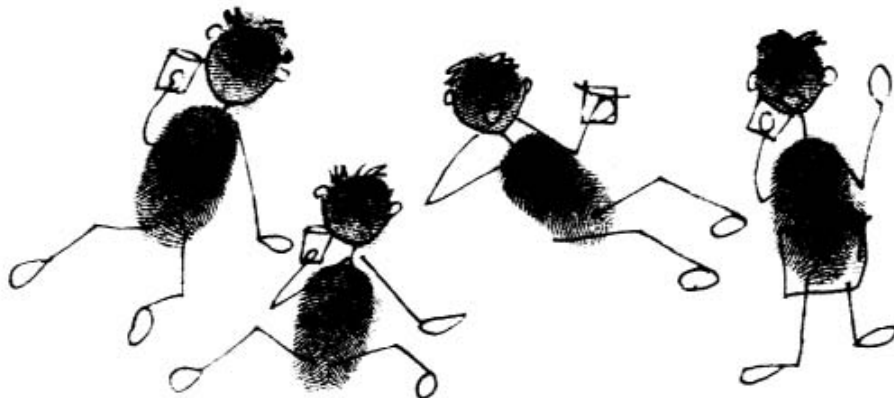
- Why do people drink ?

(Ask each learner to answer this question. The following questions could be asked to elicit more information.)

- Is it because they believe that it helps them forget physical pain resulting from hard work ?
- Is it because the liquor shop is in or very close to the village ?
- Is it because they feel the need to give company to their friends who drink ?
- Is it because they believe that it helps them forget problems ?
- Is it because they get a "kick?"
- Is it because they are happy ?
- Is it because they are depressed ?

Help the discussions towards examining each one of the above reasons and help them find out for themselves the validity of the reasons given.

Also help in finding out steps/measures to be taken to control/stop the excess.



Excesses In Life

(GAMBLING)

OBJECTIVE

To help learners critically analyse the habit of gambling and how it affects the individual, his family and his community

Begin the session by asking the learners to carefully listen to the story YOU are about to read, to help answer the questions that follow the story presentation

STORY



Kathiravan is the fourth and the youngest child of Perumal and Devaki. He is not interested in studies. Being the youngest, he has been pampered by everyone in the family. At the age of 8, he began to help his father in fishing. Whenever he found time, he would play marbles on the roadside with friends of his age. He also enjoyed watching others play marbles. There were some boys who would bet on match labels. Soon he switched over to betting with money. Some boys winning as much as Rs 3/- from the bets. Kathiravan thought that playing marbles for money would be more interesting than playing for fun. He began betting with match labels. Soon he switched over to betting with money. He was not very good at the game and, therefore, rarely won. The money he managed to get from his parents and at times from his grandparents, was not enough. He felt that if only he had more money, he would be able to play a large number of games and thereby win more. He slowly tried getting as much as he could from home, either with or without the knowledge of his parents. As years passed, gambling became his primary interest. He won and lost money alternately. When he was 17 years old, he began playing cards for money.

Now ask the following questions

- How did Kathiravan start gambling ?
- Is it good to gamble ?
- Are there persons like Kathiravan in our village ? How many ?
- What can happen to Kathiravan next ?

After eliciting answers from the learners, continue to read the second phase of the story.

Gambling took much of Kathiravan's time. Though he earned from fishing, he did not give the income to his parents, but spent it on gambling. His father was very upset and often scolded him. Whenever he did not have enough money to gamble, Kathiravan began stealing goods from home. He either sold or mortgaged them. He was of no help to his parents but only a source of problems. His parents thought that he would become responsible once he got married and so arranged his marriage. For a couple of weeks following the marriage Kathiravan remained in the house. But soon his friends pulled him out to play cards. Kathiravan was once again busy with his regular gambling schedule. He became the father of two children. His wife tried her best to make him forget gambling, but failed. Soon the family was in ruins.

Now ask the following questions

- What happened to Kathiravan's family ?
- Have you come across such families in our village ? If not in our village, elsewhere ?
- Guess what can happen next.
- What implications will gambling have for Kathiravan's community ?
- Why was his community unable to stop people from gambling ?

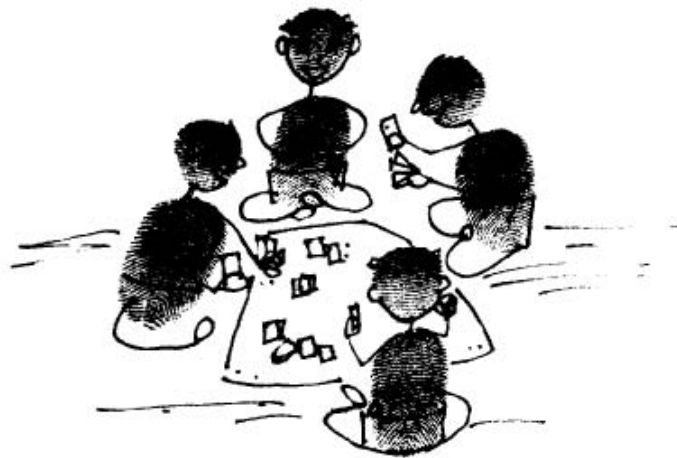
Divide the learners into small groups and ask them to discuss

What could be done to reduce gambling in our community ?

- action to be taken by the individual
- action to be taken by the community.

What difficulties could you face in limiting gambling and how would you like to overcome such difficulties ?

Attention could be drawn to organizing games such as kabbadi, volley ball, football, etc., cultural programmes, such as street plays, villupattu,* kathakalakshepams,*dramas, songs, folk dances and puppetry, which provide entertainment and educa-



* Villupattu, Kathakalakshepams - both are story telling by singing using different local musical instruments

Fairness

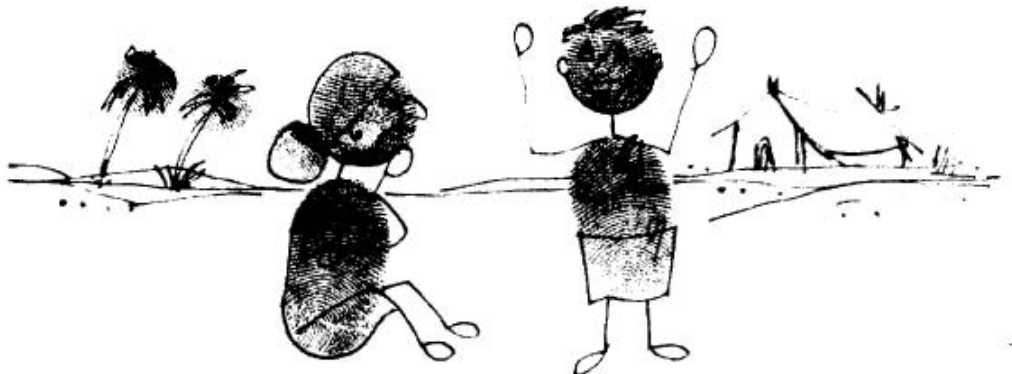
OBJECTIVES

1. To help learners look at the real situation regarding the status of women
2. To visualise a fair or just situation with respect to women

Present the following true life situation

Nagakanni returns home tired after a long trek with a basket full of fish to the market. Her youngest child aged two runs up to her and wants to be breast fed. After about 10 minutes of sitting, she goes to the corner where she cooks food. She spreads the plates and serves food for the other four children who are all half asleep. They hurriedly eat and go to sleep. She puts the young one to sleep and then goes out to the open and joins a group of women.

She comes to know from them that a panchayat meeting is being conducted and the men are attending it. The women are not aware of what is being discussed. None of the women dares question why women are not allowed to participate in the meeting.



After an hour, her husband returns. She serves him food. After he finishes eating, she hurriedly eats the remaining rice. Her husband does not tell her what was discussed at the panchayat meeting. He just tells her that she should arrange for a loan of Rs 50 to be paid to the cooperative society as share capital. She tries to explain that she has already had to borrow some money for her mother who is ailing. Her husband gets angry and tells her that she should somehow arrange for the Rs 50 and then attend to her mother's illness. Fearing that he might get angrier and beat her if she persists, she remains silent. After some time, she hesitatingly asks her husband for Rs 2 to buy notebooks for her son who is attending school. Her husband refuses to give the money and asks her to buy the books from the money she has earned that day. She explains that she has money just enough to buy 1 kg of rice for the next day. Her husband is not bothered about this and he walks out of the hut. Nagakanni is left to plan for the next day with her meagre resources.

Give some time for the learners to think about the situation and ask them to describe the situation in a typical family, especially about the daily routines and celebrations.

Discuss the situation presented and the situations described by asking further questions, such as

- . What are the roles of men and women in each of the situations ?

- . Who is given the pride of place, man or woman ?

What are the decisions taken by men and by women in these situations ?

- . Who has the final say and why ?

How are women treated in the community ?

How could opportunities be created for women to play an active role in the community ?

Dowry

OBJECTIVE . To help learners to critically analyse the system of dowry

Present the following story to the learners

Kamalayee and Vadivelu are to be married in another ten days. Vadivelu's father Arumugam has demanded of Kamalayee's parents a dowry of Rs 1000 for Vadivelu and gold jewellery worth Rs 5000 for Kamalayee apart from the regular gifts of utensils for the kitchen, a steel locker and a cot with bedding, all to be given at the time of marriage. Kamalayee's father, Periakali, wants his daughter to be treated well in her husband's house. So he agrees to give the money, jewels and other articles. Arumugam, as per the custom, has agreed to meet the marriage expenses because Periakali has arranged good food at the engagement (pariyam) ceremony. But Arumugam warns Periakali that if the bride's family members attending the wedding exceeded 200, then Periakali should share a part of the food expense.

Periakali makes arrangements for the money and the purchase of gold jewellery and other articles.

Vadivelu's family lives 25 km away from Kamalayee's village. The day before the marriage, Kamalayee, her parents, family members, and other relatives take all the articles, jewels, money and board a bus. On reaching Vadivelu's village, the bridal party gets down from the bus.

On reaching Vadivelu's house, a commotion arises because the trunk containing the money and gold jewellery is missing. The elders blame one another for being careless.

Periakali informs Vadivelu of the mishap. Arumugam is not convinced. He tells Periakali clearly that the marriage will be called off if the money and the jewels are not handed over, as agreed to earlier.



in spite of pleas and assurances of handing over the agreed amount and jewellery in a few weeks' time, Arumugam refuses to accept Kamalayee as his daughter-in-law. At that time Kamalayee's uncle rushes to the spot with the lost trunk containing the jewels and cash. On realising that the trunk had been left behind in the bus, he had rushed to the main road and stopped a lorry going the same route as the bus. He explained the problem to the lorry driver who was sympathetic to him. He allowed Kamalayee's uncle to board the lorry, drove fast and caught up with the bus. Fortunately the suitcase was found.

Kamalayee's parents and relatives were very happy that the lost property had been found and that the wedding could now be conducted as originally planned. But Kamalayee has by now decided differently. She comes up to her father and says "I do not like those who marry for money. I do not want to be married to a person whose family does not treat others as human beings. I would rather remain single than be in the midst of inhuman people."*

When the story is finished, give the learners time to think about it, then ask them

Do we follow the custom of giving jewels and cash along with other articles described in the story when our daughters are married ?

What things are expected to be given to daughters at the time of wedding ?

- What do you think of the custom of giving and taking dowry ?
- What is happening in society now-a-days because of this custom ?
- What are some of the consequences of this custom ?

What suggestions do we have to improve, or reduce the ill-effects of this custom ?

* Adapted from a story published in Ananda Vikatan, a Tamil weekly published from Madras