

## Where there is a wheel.

### I. Glossary:

- 1) Neo-literate : new literates
- 2) Gramsevikas : women social workers
- 3) Phenomenon : Observed or apparent process or fact
- 4) Brainchild : product of one's thought
- 5) non-chalance : indifference

### II. Comprehension:

- 1) What does cycling as a symbol of social mobility mean?

Cycling as a symbol of social mobility means that cycling has led to the social movement where rural women should no longer stay inside the walls of the house. Instead should move from place to place to sell their produce without depending on anyone and earn for herself and set herself independent.

- 2) When Jameela Bibi says, "It is my right. We can go anywhere" she is
  - a. suggesting mobility leading to liberation

- 3) What does bicycle represent for the rural women?  
Bicycle represent independence, freedom and mobility for rural women

4) Who has cycling benefited the most?  
Cycling has benefited the rural women in being independent, mobilized and getting literate. Women agricultural labourers, quarry workers, village-help nurses, Balwadi & Anganwadi workers, gem-cutters, school teachers, gramvikas, mid-day meal workers and school and college students have got benefited by cycling.

5) 'Explored routine' and male imposed barriers refer to  
a. lack of freedom of movement.

6) What is common between neo-literates & neo-cyclists?  
The common thing b/w the neo-literates & the neo-cyclists is that they saw a direct link between cycling & personal independence.

7) How did the men react to women taking to cycling?  
Men made filthy remarks on women and also blamed their characters. But these were also men who supported it, like bicycle shop owners and male activists of the Kivoli movement.

8) What do the phrases 'flags on the handle bars' and 'bells ringing' suggest?

'Flags on the handle bars' & 'bells ringing' suggest their passion towards cycling & their interest and improvements towards it. It also refers to their pride in riding cycles. They were proud to exhibit their skills through a rally on the International Women's day in 1992, on which over 1500 female cyclists took Pudukkottai by storm.

- 9) Why did UNICEF sanction mopeds to Shivoli women activists?  
 In a single week more than 70,000 women displayed their cycling skills in an exhibition-cum-contest run by the Shivoli Syakkam. Due to this the UNICEF was impressed & thus sanctioned 50 mopeds for the Shivoli women activists.

### iii Comprehension ii

- 7) What is the role of Shivoli in liberating women?  
 Shivoli Syakkam (lights of knowledge movement), started ~~the~~ making the maximum use of the enthusiasm, the new literates had towards the cycling. N. Kannamma, the Shivoli central co-ordinator was one of the pioneers of the movement. They felt that this would reduce the women's dependence on men and thus would help in building up their confidence levels.

Shivoli Syakkam conducted training camps to train the rural women in cycling and the already trained cyclist worked here free of cost to train the prospective learners.

They also conducted exhibition-cum-contest for women to display their cycling skills, & by seeing this ~~and~~ impressed UNICEF sanctioned 50 mopeds for the Shivoli women.

Initially when the men in the village made disty remarks on the women, Shivoli gave them social sanction and encouraged them to strive harder towards independence.

Shivoli activists produced songs to motivate the female cyclists. Thus they opened a way out of enforced routines and male imposed barriers for the rural woman.

Q) In what different ways does the cycle empower rural women?

Cycling has become a social movement in Pudukkottai district, in Tamil Nadu. The women have come out of the four walls of their houses and are fighting <sup>against</sup> every barrier <sup>to</sup> that stops them from being independent. The rural women especially the neo literates saw a direct link between being independent and cycling. It gave them confidence & self respect beyond explanation. It reduced their dependence on men. Bicycling has become a symbol of independence, freedom & mobility.

Cycling has helped women to do their daily work faster. It saves a lot of time as they can collect water by hanging multiple number of pots to the cycles and can even travel with their children. Even casting provisions can be done on their own. They don't have to wait for public transportation or depend on men to drop them to the bus stops anymore. With the help of cycling they can reach poorly connected routes and can cover a larger area for selling their produce.

Cycling offered a way out of enforced routines and male imposed barriers. The time saved while cycling can be utilized effectively in cooking or doing other jobs.

All together one can say that cycling has made rural women independent, courageous, confident and gave them a sense of a great achievement which eventually leads way to their freedom & liberation.

3) Why does the author describe the Arivoli 'cycling training camp' as an unusual experience? The author says visiting an Arivoli cycling training camp is an unusual experience because she found in Kilakuruchi all the prospective learners had turned out in their Sunday best. The author was struck by sheer passion of the pro-cycling movement. Cycling offered a way out of enforced routines around male imposed barriers. The neo-cyclists enjoy the songs produced by Arivoli to encourage bicycling.

4) Do you think women taking to cycling contributes to literacy movement?

Yes, the cycling movement empowered the literacy movement. Literate women can stand on their own without depending on others to solve the challenging routine & also daily chores of her house. Literacy reduces the dependence on men and also boosts their confidence. It gave them freedom, also social mobility. An educated woman moulds her social behaviour & acts accordingly. It gives them confidence as they can now sell their produce faster and to a larger number of people by moving around freely and saves a lot of their time, which was otherwise wasted on walking or waiting for public transport. Lack of mobility, undermines the women's confidence so a woman learning cycling is as significant as the literacy movement.

5) How does Sheela Rani Chankath, the district collector, promote the empowerment of women?

The whole phenomenon of cycling was the brain child of the former district collector Sheela Rani Chankath. In 1991 she wanted to train female activists so that literacy could reach in the interiors, she also included mobility as a part of the literacy movement. She identified that lack of mobility among women leads to undermining their confidence. So, Chankath pushed the banks to give loans for the women to buy cycles. She gave personal attention for the empowerment of women, ~~as~~ the top beneficial in the district. She also got each block to accept specific duties in this regard.

6) How did the women react to the shortage of ladies cycles?

More than 1 lakh rural women in Pudukkottai district in T.N have taken to cycling as a symbol of independence, freedom & mobility. More & more women wanted to learn this skill. As a result there was a shortage of ladies cycles. Every woman wanted to learn and so they were not bothered to ~~ride~~ ride gents cycle even. Some women preferred this as gents cycle has additional bars from the seat to the handle. The women felt that they could seat the child on that. They could even carry more than 8 pots of water or firewood or their produce for sale on those bars.

iv Comprehension in

1) How does P. Sainath show that cycling brings about changes beyond economic gains?

Cycling for the rural women has brought freedom, independence and mobility. It has reduced their <sup>need of</sup> burden. They had not to wait for their bus where the roads were in horrible condition. Cycling swept across Pudukkottai women, agricultural workers, quarry labourers, village nurses, balwadi & Anganwadi workers, gem cutters and school teachers, grain sevikas, mid-day meal workers had purchased bicycle for their convenience.

Everyone of the neo-literates, neo-cyclists women saw the direct link b/w cycling & her personal independence. Women gained confidence as it reduced their dependence on men.

Nowadays we can see a women doing 4-km stretch on a cycle to collect water, carrying provisions on her own. Moreover, the literacy rate increased drastically. Every women wanted to learn bicycling. This led to the scarcity of cycles & thus they started buying Gents cycle. They never bothered to ride on it, instead they found that the bar that ran across could seat their children. More importantly women could sell her agricultural produce or other produces by themselves to a larger area. It cuts down on the time wasted in waiting for bus. They could cover a large area that ~~hope~~ <sup>used</sup> to cover to sell their produce. Small produce <sup>used</sup> to wait for buses were often dependent on their family, even reach the bus stop, they could cover only a limited number of villages to sell their produce.

Sometimes they had to rush back early to attend to their children & do their household chores. Those who had bicycles combined different tasks with non-chance overall cycling has offered a way out of enforced routines around male imposed business. This saved time & money & thus gave them a greater enthusiasm towards life.

Q) 'O sister come learn cycling, move with the wheel of time'. How does the song suggest that the cycle could be an instrument of social change and progress?

The song asks the women to learn cycling as it is time to move along with the advancements that happens around the world with the passage of time. Societies are progressing at a very fast rate and they are asking the women to forget their business and to learn cycling to acquire independence, freedom and mobility and thus they can make progress and help to build a better tomorrow. Hence the cycling movement also helps the literacy drive and thus ensures that all women get educated & thus improve their standard of living. This song has encouraged the rural women to be independent as they could do their chores without depending on anyone and could easily save a lot of time which was otherwise wasted in waiting & they could also increase their income by selling their produce to a larger number of people.