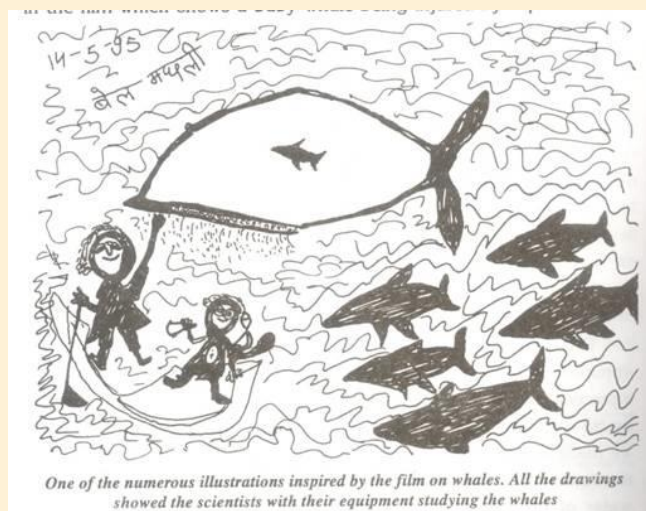


Mahila Shiksha Kendra



Between 1994 and 1997, we had worked intensively with teachers and learners at the local Mahila Samakhya team in Banda to develop the MSK curriculum. Developing that first curriculum for the first MSK was a furiously frantic but heady experience. The curriculum was designed to be learner-centered, holistic, feminist and non-judgmental approach.

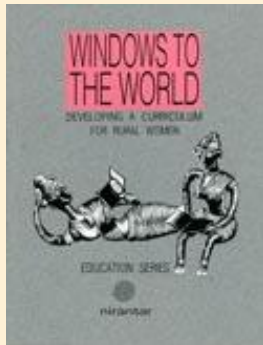


One of the numerous illustrations inspired by the film on whales. All the drawings showed the scientists with their equipment studying the whales

The curriculum also sought to redefine what is considered to be 'relevant'. In the context of rural development, rural women are constructed primarily as 'development objects'. This construction accordingly determines that only development which is 'useful' is deemed to be relevant. And usefulness is generally defined as 'that which directly improves their daily lives'. Thus, it is established that literacy is relevant, vocational training is relevant, and functional information (health, hygiene, government schemes, ways to improve cropping patterns, etc) is relevant. Development interventions for rural women have largely remained circumscribed by these parameters of relevance.

In our curriculum, we sought to link personal experience to an understanding of larger social realities. For example, personal experiences of caste combined with the historical antecedents of the caste system and its evolution as a system of social stratification. We also redefined relevance by exploring areas such as popular science, and perhaps unsurprisingly found that rural women are no different from us in their innate curiosity and desire to learn new things.

Windows To The World



The curriculum for the first MSK was developed around the themes of land, water, forest, health and society, interwoven with issues of gender, caste and class.

An example from the curriculum framework developed by Nirantar for the Mahila Shikshan Kendra (documented in our publication *Windows to the World*) has been referred to in the National Curriculum Framework Document (2005) to illustrate possible new approaches that link the sciences and social sciences, and that integrate issues of gender, caste and class into the concepts being taught.

Drawing on our experiences of developing curriculum for Mahila Samakhya's Mahila Shikshan Kendra, we formulated a new curriculum for Janishala, a residential centre for adolescent girls in Lalitpur.

Banda Ki Bateeyan – A Literacy Primer

Nirantar has published a range of teaching-learning materials that include basic literacy and numeracy primers for women, post literacy material to strengthen their newly acquired skills, and continuing education material that focuses on information and perspective building. One of the first such materials is *Banda ki bateeyan*, developed with the Mahila Samakhya programme.

A Curriculum for Handpump Mechanics



Nirantar has also worked with a group of non-literate and neo-literate women handpump mechanics in Uttar Pradesh to develop a training curriculum. This handpump mechanics group had been trained by Vanangana, a grassroots organisation in Uttar Pradesh, and to know more about this curriculum or their work, please [click here for contact details](#).