

Gender Equality Session

Target Group: Parents of Children (7–14 Years)

1. Welcome and Building Trust

- **Opening:** Start by praising their hard work. *"The day and night labor you put into the blistering heat of these brick kilns is all for one goal—to build a bright future for your children."*
- **Discussion:** Ask a simple question to get them talking: *"When making bricks here at the kiln, mixing the mud, shaping the bricks, and stacking them in the furnace—both women and men do this work together, right? If women are equal in hard labor, why should we treat sons and daughters differently at home?"*
- **Objective:** To make them realize that women are in no way lesser when it comes to hard work, so children should be raised without gender bias.

2. Key Challenges for this Age Group

In the brick kiln environment, specific issues arise for children of this age group that need to be addressed:

- **School Dropouts:** When work pressure increases at the kiln, 10 to 14-year-old girls are often pulled out of school to care for younger siblings or handle household cooking.
- **Unfair Freedom for Boys:** As boys reach 12–14 years old, they are often given the freedom to roam with friends and spend money, while girls are strictly confined to the hut/home.
- **Anxiety Over Early Marriage:** Once a girl reaches 13 or 14, parents worry intensely about her safety at the kiln site and start planning her marriage.

3. Three Simple Rules for Parents (Action Plan)

Rule 1: Son or Daughter—Ensure Both Complete School (7 Minutes)

- **Message to Parents:** *"The name you stamp on these bricks stays forever. Similarly, stamp the power of education onto your children's lives."*
- **Action:** Even if the kiln migrates, do not stop your children's—especially your daughters'—education. Do not force a girl into full-time household chores. Send both boys and girls to school.

Rule 2: Divide Household Chores Equally

- **Message to Parents:** *"Do not excuse your son from household work just because he is a boy."*
- **Action:** Teach a 12–14-year-old boy how to fetch water, gather firewood, and look after younger siblings. Do not view your daughter as weak; she is fully capable of studying and making her own decisions.

Rule 3: Safety and Respect

- **Message to Parents:** *"Talk openly to your growing (7 to 14 years old) sons and daughters."*
- **Action:** Teach your son how to respect girls at the kiln and in the village. Teach your daughter safety rules, but do not destroy her future by pulling her out of school or marrying her off early out of fear.

4. Two Simple Stories / Case Studies

Present two relatable situations to make the parents think:

- **Scenario 1:** The workload at the kiln is heavy today. The mother tells 14-year-old Laxmi, *"Don't go to school today. Stay home, cook, and watch the baby."* Meanwhile, her 12-year-old brother, Raju, is sent to school. Is this right? Why can't Raju be asked to help with the chores instead?
- **Scenario 2:** Out of fear of what people at the kiln might say, a father fixes the marriage of his 13-year-old daughter. On the neighboring kiln, another girl kept studying and eventually secured a job at an Anganwadi (daycare) or a local shop. What kind of future do you want for your daughter?

5. Conclusion and Pledge

- **Commitment:** Ask all parents to hold out their hands and repeat a simple pledge:
 - *"I will treat my daughter and my son equally."*
 - *"I will not marry my daughter off at an early age (child marriage)."*
 - *"No matter how heavy the workload at the kiln, I will not stop my children's education."*
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