

Helping Children to a Better Life

This report is taken from the website of The Global Fund for Children
(www.globalfundforchildren.org)

Part 1

“Before, my life was like that of a caged bird that fidgets in the cage thinking about getting out and flying.”

Mina Naskar, 15, speaks for many girls in her village of Umarpota in eastern India whose lives have been changed by Nishtha. Nishtha was founded more than twenty-five years ago as a village charity club for women. The movement promotes education and basic rights for hundreds of girls and women. In a society where girls have traditionally been confined to household duties without receiving the recognition, appreciation, or opportunities afforded to the boys of the community, Nishtha has made enormous progress in changing gender attitudes that have discriminated against women for generations.

Read **Part 1** and answer the questions.

Where is Mina Naskar from?

What is the name of the movement?

When was it started?

What does this movement promote?

What was the traditional role for women and girls in these villages?

Part 2

With centres in more than sixty villages in rural West Bengal, Nishtha involves entire communities in its educational and training activities aimed at eliminating gender inequality, illiteracy, and child labour. Through an integrated program combining non-formal education, basic health care, and awareness, girls gain the skills and confidence that enable them to claim roles in their communities that are equal to those of their male counterparts.

Read **Part 2** and answer the questions.

In how many villages does Nishta operate?

What sort of serious problems is it trying to eliminate?

What do the young girls learn from this movement?

Part 3

Nishtha classes—which are available to both girls and boys and even to older women who did not have the opportunity to attend school in their youth—include reading, math, geography, and art. Health lessons teach young women to care for their bodies, and children learn proper habits of hygiene that they then take home to their families. Both girls and boys participate equally in community development activities such as the building of roads and irrigation canals.

Read **Part 3** and answer the questions.

Who goes to Nishta classes?

What do they learn in class?

Part 4

As volunteers and teachers are in short supply here, older girls known as Kishori Bahini manage many of the activities and classes, learning important leadership skills that help diminish the traditional roles of superiority and subservience that divide genders in most communities.

Are there enough teachers to teach the classes in the villages?

What do the young girls learn from managing the classes?

Look at Mina's words ***"Before, my life was like that of a caged bird that fidgets in the cage thinking about getting out and flying."***

Why do you think she felt like a bird in a cage?

Vocabulary Exercise

Look at these words taken from the text and check their meaning

charity	recognition	rural	participate
eliminating	integrated	counterparts	irrigation
promotes	appreciation	illiteracy	volunteers
confined	gender	hygiene	diminish
subservience	canals	superiority	leadership

Take each one and write a synonym or a phrase showing you understand its meaning

Word	Synonym/Definition

Writing Task

Write an account of the Primary Education you experienced when you first started school.

Include the following details:

School starting age

Subjects learned

Size of classes

School room/building

Teachers

Friends/classmates

How it prepared you for further education

The Nishta Movement

MODULE: Cross Cultural Awareness

LEVEL: R2 Upper

Time: 60 mins-75 mins	Focus: Awareness of other cultures and to promote discussion on cultural differences and understanding
Class organisation: Group and individual work	Type of activity: Reading, comprehension and Vocab study. Writing a personal account
FETAC: Level 4/5 Reading Level 4/5 Writing	
ELP:	

For this activity you need...
1 worksheet per learner dictionaries

N.B.

In Class Procedure at a Glance
<p>Class can be divided into four groups. Each group reads a part of the report. Each group gives feed back on what they have read.</p> <p>Vocabulary study and exercise</p> <p>Class discussion</p> <p>Writing Task</p>