

English-302  
**Chapter-25**  
**BHOLI**



**Summary**

- This story is about a young girl named Bholi who was neglected by everybody but education transformed her and instilled courage and confidence in her. Bholi was one of seven children of Ramlal. She had pock-marks on her face and was a slow learner.
- Her father Ramlal persuaded her to join a primary school in the village. Bholi was fearful of going to school at first but when she was given new and clean clothes to wear, she felt better.
- Her teacher encouraged her and asked her to be fearless. She also told her to come to school everyday if she wants to overcome her stammering.
- Few years later her parents again wanted to marry her off, they chose an old widower for her. But the old man refused and demanded dowry to marry Bholi after discovering small pox marks on her face.
- Ramlal agreed to pay the money, but Bholi refused to marry the greedy widower. She later on said that she will take care of her parents and teach in the same school where she got her education.

**Important points from the text:**

- This story is about Bholi, whose real name was Sulekha. She suffered from the disease of small-pox which left marks on her face.
- This made her look ugly and dull and people often made fun of her. She also suffered from brain-damage in her childhood and used to stammer.
- People called her “Bholi” because she remained slow and was a simpleton. Her father Ramlal had three sons and four daughters, Bholi was the youngest of all.
- Ramlal was worried about her and wanted her to settle down but he couldn’t find a husband as nobody accepted her due to her dullness and ugliness. One fine day a girl’s primary school was inaugurated in the village, and Ramlal decided to send Bholi there.
- At first, Bholi was scared but when she was given good clothes and other things, she began to believe that she was being taken to a better place than her home. She was happy to see girls of her age around her and wanted to make friends, however her stammering discouraged her. But her kind-hearted teacher, encouraged and motivated her, moreover, she told her that she could overcome her stammering if she came to school daily. This aroused hope and a new life in Bholi.
- After few years the primary school transformed into high school and a marriage proposal came for Bholi. He was a lame old man, who already had children. He was rich and demanded no dowry. Her parents fixed up her marriage as they found the proposal ideal.

- On the wedding day, the bridegroom arrived and filled Ramlal with joy. During the wedding, the groom discovered that Bholi had pock marks and demanded a dowry of five thousand rupees in return for marrying her. Ramlal begged for mercy but Bishamber Nath did not agree.
- Bholi's father decided to give the money in order to save his honour, but Bholi refused to marry such a greedy person. People were surprised to see her speaking without stammering. Bholi told her father that she would serve her parents in their old age and will teach in the same school from where she learnt so many good things.

**Important words from the text:**

- Pock-marks: Marks on the skin left by the small-pox disease
- Mimicked : Copy the behaviour or speech of other people
- Stammered: To speak with many pauses or repetitions because of having speech problem
- Disfigured: To spoil or damage the appearance of
- Squatted: sit with folded knees
- Scurried: To move quickly with short steps
- Throbbing: when heart is beating fast
- Contempt: Disregard for something that should be considered
- Thunderstruck: extremely surprised or shock
- Contemplating: Thinking deeply or carefully about something

**Evaluate us:**

1. What do you think are the barriers to access education for girls in India and how can we overcome these challenges?
2. What do you think are the barriers to access education for girls in India and how can we overcome these challenges?
3. 'Dowry is negation of the girl's dignity'. Discuss with reference to the story 'Bholi'.
4. Did Bholi enjoy her first day at school? Does she find her teacher different from the people at home?
5. Bholi is a child different from others. This difference makes her an object of neglect and laughter. Elaborate this statement.

**Do you know?**

Child marriage is defined as a marriage of a girl or boy before the age of 18 and refers to both formal marriages and informal unions in which children under the age of 18 live with a partner as if married. Child marriage violates children's rights and places them at high risk of violence, exploitation, and abuse. Girls and boys married as children are more likely to lack the skills, knowledge and job prospects needed to lift their families out of poverty and contribute to their country's social and economic growth.

**Extend your horizon.**

What is your understanding of equal opportunities for girls and how do you think we all are working towards achieving it? What do you think are the barriers to access education for girls in India and how can we overcome these challenges?(convert them into 2 questions)

Write an article in a newspaper about the need for empowerment of women.