

Chapter Review

- "Bholi" is a story by K. A. Abbas. It is about Sulekha, called Bholi (simpleton), who changes from a timid girl into a brave, educated woman.
- Sulekha was the youngest child of Ramlal, the numberdar. As a baby she fell from a cot, and as a result had a dull mind. She also had smallpox, which left pock-marks on her face. She stammered, so everyone called her Bholi.
- The Tehsildar ordered Ramlal to send his daughters to school to set an example. His wife said that Bholi could go since there was little chance of her getting married anyway.
- Bholi was frightened, but she liked the girls and the pictures in her class. Her teacher spoke to her kindly, and encouraged her to read and speak without fear.
- Years later, a marriage proposal came from Bishamber, a well-to-do grocer, who didn't ask for dowry. Bholi's parents agreed as they thought she would never get another.
- On the wedding day, Bishamber saw her pock-marked face and demanded five thousand rupees as dowry. Her father pleaded and begged.
- Bholi, now educated and confident, refused to marry. She said she would not marry a greedy man, and would take care of her parents and teach in the school.
- At the end she is called Sulekha, showing that she has become a strong and mature woman.

Key Terms

Numberdar – A village headman who collects land revenue.

Tehsildar – A government revenue officer of a tehsil.

Pock-marks – Scars of smallpox on the skin.

Dowry – Money or goods given by the bride's family at marriage.

Stammer – To speak with repeated sounds and pauses.

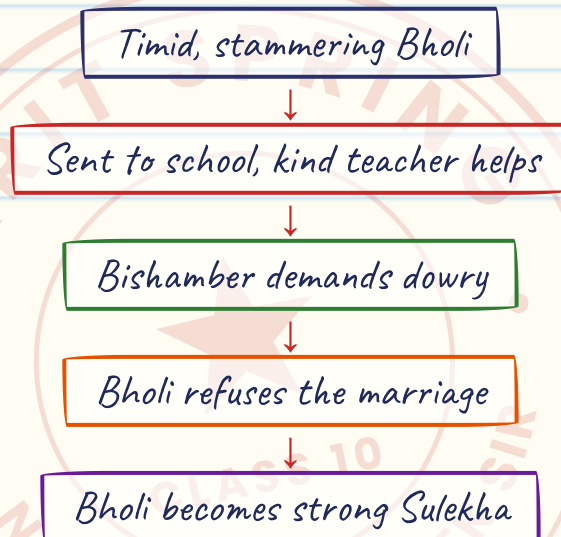
Simpleton – A foolish or unaware person.

Disparity – A great difference.

Self-respect – Pride in one's own worth.

Diagrams / Flowcharts

Bholi's Transformation



Bholi Before and After

Before

- Called simpleton
- Afraid, stammering
- Does as told

After (Sulekha)

- Confident and educated
- Takes her own decision
- Defends her family's honour

About the Author

- Khwaja Ahmad Abbas (1914-1987) was an Indian writer, journalist and filmmaker who wrote on social issues.

Theme / Message

- Education empowers girls and gives them confidence. A good teacher can change a life.
- The story criticises dowry, the neglect of girls and judging people by looks.
- Girls and boys must have equal rights and duties.

Clues to Language

- Words like pitaji, tehsildar, izzat and numberdar show the characters spoke in Hindi.

Textbook Exercise Questions

Q.1 Why is Bholi's father worried about her?

Ans. Bholi had neither good looks nor intelligence, so it would be hard to find a groom for her.

Q.2 For what unusual reasons is Bholi sent to school?

Ans. The Tehsildar ordered Ramlal to send his daughters to school. His wife said Bholi could go, as she was unlikely to marry anyway.

Q.3 Does Bholi enjoy her first day at school?

Ans. Yes. She was afraid, but happy to find girls her age and pictures on the wall.

Q.4 Does she find her teacher different from the people at home?

Ans. Yes. At home, she was never spoken to politely and was made fun of. The teacher spoke to her softly and encouraged her.

Q.5 Why do Bholi's parents accept Bishamber's proposal?

Ans. They thought she would never get another proposal, and Bishamber was a well-to-do grocer who asked no dowry.

Q.6 Why does the marriage not take place?

Ans. On seeing her pock-marks, Bishamber demanded five thousand rupees. Bholi refused to marry a greedy man.

Q.7 What made her feel that she was going to a better place than her home?

Ans. She saw their cow Lakshmi sold earlier, but when she was bathed, given clean clothes and her hair oiled, she felt school must be a better place.

Q.8 How did the teacher change the course of her life?

Ans. She did not mock her stammer, encouraged her to speak and made her a confident person.

Q.9 Why did Bholi agree first to an unequal match and later reject it?

Ans. She agreed to please her parents who thought it was her best chance. She rejected it when the groom insulted her father by demanding dowry, which shows her self-respect and courage.

Q.10 Why is she called Sulekha near the end?

Ans. Because she has become a mature, confident woman who takes her own decisions. 'Bholi' means simpleton; Sulekha is her real self.

Q.11 How can we change social attitudes shown in the story?

Ans. By treating girls and boys equally, giving equal education and jobs, and saying no to dowry.

Board Exam Questions (Important)

Q.1 Write a character sketch of Bholi. (100 words)

Ans. Bholi, whose real name is Sulekha, is a shy, pock-marked and stammering girl. She is neglected at home, but a kind teacher gives her education and confidence. In the end she boldly refuses to marry a

greedy groom and decides to look after her parents. She becomes a symbol of courage and self-respect.

Q.2 What role does the teacher play in Bholi's life?

Ans. She treats Bholi with love and respect, teaches her to speak without fear and makes her confident. She changes her life.

Q.3 Reference to context: "Bholi had not the slightest intention of marrying him." Why?

Ans. Bishamber had demanded dowry and insulted her father. A man who is greedy and respects only money and looks is not worthy of her.

Q.4 Value-based: What does the story teach about education and dowry?

Ans. Education gives courage and independence. Dowry is a social evil and must be rejected.

