

## Lesson 3

### The Unbeaten Girls

#### A. Look at the picture and discuss the following questions.

Who are these girls?

Are you familiar with such pictures? Why/Why not?



#### B. Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

In a traditional society like ours, little boys and girls are given separate sets of toys. While toys for boys include cars, guns or footballs, girls have to be satisfied with dolls (often Barbie dolls) and doll-houses or miniature cooking utensils. The underlying assumption is that boys are active and full of vigour, but girls are naive and lack the intelligence or energy to match their male counterparts.



Sabina Akhter

This false assumption has been shattered plenty of times in the recent decades as girls began to show their power and women began competing with men in almost all areas of life. It has been conclusively proved wrong most recently by the girls of Kalsindur, a village in a remote area in Dhobaura upazila in Mymensingh district. The villagers are mostly low-income but hardworking people. Even a few years ago, there was no electricity in the village. But some girls have illuminated the village — both literally and metaphorically — with their belief in themselves and their skill in the game of football. The village has emerged now as a footballer factory and a symbol of girl power. And in recognition of their success, the village was provided electricity by the government.

Sabina Akhter, Sanjida Akhter (7th under 16 promising female player of Asia in 2014), Shiuli Azim, Mariya Manda (Captain, Under 15 Female Football Team 2017), Shamsunnahar senior (who scored the solitary goal against India which ensured SAFF Under 15 Women Championship in 2017), Shamsunnahar junior (Captain of Under 15 National Football Team 2019), Tahura Khatun (who scored 40 goals in international



Tahura Khatun

matches till 2021), Marzia Khatun, Mahmuda Khatun, Nazma Akhter, Sajeda Akhter, Rozina Khatun, Taniya Akhter, Rupa Akhter, Kalpana Akhter, Purnima Vaskar are names of some bright stars in Bangladesh Women's National Football Team. They all are from Kalsindur village. Their talent and determination have brought them to where they are now.

While in Kalsindur Government Primary School the girls had a hat-trick record of the championship in Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Gold Cup Primary School Football Tournament in 2013, 2014 and 2015. After completing primary education they moved on to Kalsindur Secondary School. While there, they became four-time champions in the National Summer Sports Competition for Schools, Madrasas and Technical institutions in 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2019. Kalsindur girls also clinched the Girls' Football Championship in Inter-College (UMA) Games and Sports Competition in 2019-20.



Sanjida Akhter

The Bangladesh girls' football team won the AFC Under 14 Regional Football Championship 2015 in Nepal and the team was dominated by Kalsindur footballers. Do you know the team that won the championship in AFC Under 14 Regional Football Tournament 2016 in Tajikistan also had eight Kalsindur girls including the captain and the highest scorer? Bangladesh National Women's Football Team was champion in Hong Kong Under-15 Women's Jockey Cup and Kalsindur girls led the match. They

also proved themselves when Bangladesh shared championship jointly with Laos in 2019. Who could even think that these girls would seize the the 1st SAFF under-18 Women Championship in Bhutan in 2018, remaining unbeaten? The whole nation was overwhelmed at their success, and their school was immediately nationalist at their request.

The success of Kalsindur girls reads like an epic. They started their journey with practically nothing. They didn't have any boots or jerseys to wear. Initially, they played wearing *salwar* and *kamij*. They also suffered from malnutrition. What made them win against all adversities then? What was the magic behind? Mohammad Mafiz Uddin was an assistant teacher at Kalsindur Government Free Primary School where Minati Rani Sheel was the head teacher. They observed the girls' interests in football and decided to help. It was however not that easy. Girls playing football is still not



Maria Manda

a common picture in Bangladesh. Guardians were not convinced as they were used to seeing girls helping mothers with household chores. A farmer, an auto-rickshaw driver, a tea-shop owner or a housemaid mother couldn't be that ambitious either. But Minati Rani Sheel and Mohammad Mafiz Uddin persuaded them to allow their daughters to play. Being great motivators, the two teachers supported the girls in their effort to overcome the odds. They inspired them, created opportunities for them and took personal care of them. Soon the girls could prove themselves, shaking off their inhibition. Their success has also persuaded the villagers to come to their support.

When the girls moved to the nearby secondary school and college, they did not have their Minati Maam and Mafiz Uddin Sir with them, but soon another motherly person offered her helping hand – Mala Rani Sarkar, an Assistant Professor of History — who was joined by one of her colleagues, Juel Mia. They agreed to coach the girls. Mr Jalaluddin, who was then the head teacher of the school, also supported them. Gradually the local community, public representatives and the local administration came forward. Bangladesh Football Federation also gave special attention to them and finally another football magician, Golam Robbani Choton, the coach of the Bangladesh Women’s National Football Team, mentored these girls and helped them become complete professional footballers.

Now people realise what their golden girls could bring for them. “When these girls go from one place to another, even the auto-rickshaw pullers don’t take any fare from them as they are the pride of the village. It’s a small token of recognition but it’s great!” says Mala Rani Sarkar, the Team Manager of Kalisindur Women’s Football Team. She also adds that Kalsindur would present more female footballers in future, as of 2021 they are grooming another 65 girls to play for the nation.

**C. Each of the words below has multiple options for their meanings where one is correct and three are false. Tick the correct ones.**

1. Barbie-dolls mean –
  - a. a doll representing a conventionally attractive young woman.
  - b. a doll with a headdress passing over or under the chin and covering the neck.
  - c. a doll with many barbs around her chin and neck.
  - d. a doll conventionally attractive and young with a family title Barbie.
2. What does ‘counterpart’ mean?
 

a. enemy	b. competitor	c. peer	d. opponent
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3. The word ‘illuminate’ means to
 

a. darken	b. dim	c. brighten	d. obscure
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4. The word ‘emerge’ means to
 

a. disappear	b. turn up	c. vanish	d. leave
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5. The word ‘mentor’ means –
 

a. trainer	b. observer	c. counsellor	d. checker
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6. Which of the following words is an antonym of the word ‘clinch’?
 

a. confirm	b. approve	c. disown	d. secure
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7. What is an epic?
 

a. a kind of a long poem	b. a kind of long narrative
c. a kind of a long play	d. a kind of a long dialogue



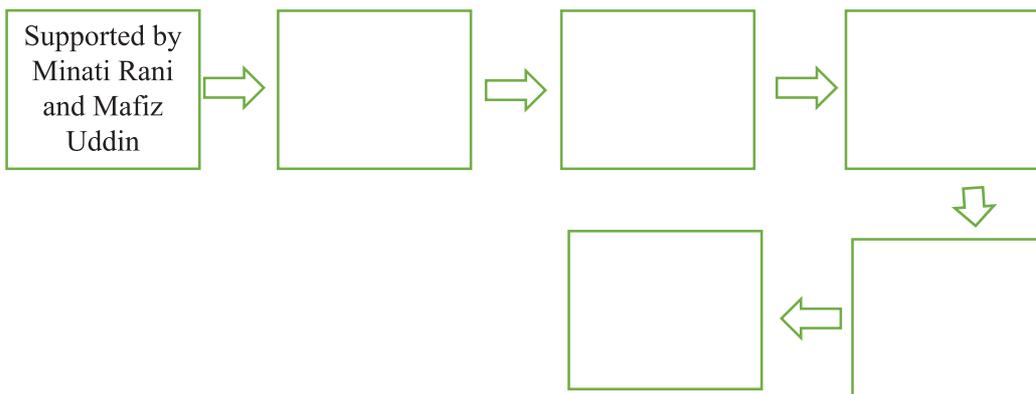
**D. Write sentences with the words below and provide their Bangla equivalent words in the blanks spaces provided:**

unleash	comrade	adversities
intrinsic	groom	inhibition

**E. Answer the following questions.**

1. How do people commonly discriminate between genders?
2. What do the Kalsindur girls owe to their teachers and guardians?
3. What is the moral of the story and how does it affect you?
4. Who, according to you, contributed the most to Kalsindur girls’ success? Why do you think so?
5. Justify the statement – the story is a good example of reciprocal respect.

**F. Make a flow chart on the major success of Kalsindur girls.**



**G. Change the speech of the following text.**

“When these girls go from one place to another, even the auto-rickshaw pullers don’t take any fare from them as they are the pride of the village. It’s a small token of recognition but it’s great!,” says Mala Rani Sarkar, the Team Manager of Kalsindur Women Football Team.

**H. Work in pairs. Suppose you have a sister or cousin who wants to play football or cricket or any other outdoor game. What suggestions will you give her and why?**

**H. Write a letter to the local sports authority to arrange an inter-college football tournament in your area.**