



**THE VILLAGE**  
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL  
"We Nurture Dreams"

## **Bholi**

### **Bholi Summary**

Bholi was written by Khwaja Ahmad Abbas (K.A. Abbas), who was a popular Indian film director, journalist and novelist known for his works in Hindi, Urdu and other languages. This story is about a young girl named Sulekha, who was popularly referred to as 'Bholi' for her simple nature. At ten months, she fell from her cot, which caused some severe damage to her brain, and she used to stammer when she learnt to talk. Bholi was born a pretty child, but she suffered from smallpox that left dark pock-marks on her face permanently. The ugly marks spoiled her appearance, and people would often make fun of her due to her dullness. They would also consider her to be retarded as she stammered while speaking.

Bholi's father, Ramlal had around seven children, out of which three were sons, and four were daughters. Among all daughters, Bholi was the youngest. All her siblings were hale and hearty except young Bholi. Her parents were worried about her and how to get her married when she grew older. One fine day, Tehsildar Sahib had come to perform an inaugural ceremony at a primary school for girls in the village. He told Ramlal to send all his daughters to school. When Ramlal discussed this with his wife, she objected and stated that nobody would marry their daughters if they were sent to school. Yet, she agreed to send Bholi to school as they were not sure if she would ever get married for her appearance or feeble-mindedness.

Initially, Bholi was sceptical about going to school as she had never heard about it. However, on the first day of school, she was groomed properly and sent to school; she assumed that it was a better place than her own home. When she reached school, she was elated to see girls of her age around. She wanted to make friends but dared not to open her mouth due to stammering.

However, when the class teacher smilingly asked her name, she stammered in front of the entire class, and all the girls started laughing at her. This discouraged her completely. She started weeping and understood that nobody would like to be friends with her. Soon her teacher, a kind-hearted lady, encouraged her to tell her name again. She stammered yet again but was finally able to tell her full name. Her teacher gave her a few good books with pictures and asked her to read those as it would help her to overcome her stammering habit. She also told Bholi to come to school regularly. This gave the young girl a new ray of hope and assurance of a new life.

Many years passed, and the village soon became a small town and saw many improvements around it. Soon, there was a marriage proposal for Bholi. The prospective bridegroom, Bishamber Nath, was a limping old man with grown-up children. He was almost Bholi's father's age. However, Ramlal's family agreed to the alliance as they felt he was a well-settled fellow. Bholi's elder sisters were, however, envious of the great pomp and show at their younger sister's wedding. However, when the groom, Bishamber, was about to put the garland around the bride's neck, a woman slowly slipped the veil from Bholi's face. The groom was surprised to see the pockmarks on her face and refused to marry her without a dowry of five thousand rupees. Bholi's father, Ramlal, somehow arranged the amount and gave it to Bishamber Nath.

However, as the groom tried to garland the bride, Bholi held his hand and refused to marry such a voracious person. All the people present in the wedding were stunned to see how confidently she spoke without stuttering. The groom felt insulted and returned to his village. Later, Bholi assured her father that she would take care of him and her mother in their old age and would become a teacher in the same school where she learnt so many new and good things. Looking at this, Bholi's teacher, who was watching from a distance, felt a deep sense of relief and satisfaction at Bholi's courage and confidence that she exhibited in front of so many people.

*Bholi* illustrates that proper moral and emotional protection should be given to children during the formative years of childhood to help them grow up into responsible citizens.

# Bholi - Important Questions

## Short Answer Type Questions

**Question 1. Why is Sulekha called 'Bholi'?**

**Answer:** Sulekha is called 'Bholi' because she is a simpleton due to her suffering some brain damage after falling off a cot when she was ten months old. As a result, she is not as smart as children of her age.

**Question 2. Why did Sulekha start stammering?**

**Answer:** Sulekha was a baby when she fell down from a cot. Her brain was damaged. She could not speak till the age of five years. She was mentally slow and lacked confidence. That is why she started stammering.

**Question 3. What happened to Bholi when she was two years old?**

**Answer:** Bholi fell a victim to small pox at the age of two years. Her face and body became full of pock marks. She was still fortunate as her eyes had remained untouched and were fine.

**Question 4. How did Bholi react when the teacher asked her name?**

**Answer:** Bholi stammered when she spoke and could not tell her name completely when the teacher asked her to do so. So, she broke into tears.

**Question 5. Bholi was fascinated by the walls of the classroom. Why?**

**Answer:** The walls of the classroom had bright and colourful pictures of a horse, a goat, a parrot and a cow. They all looked familiar to Bholi and were like the ones in the village. That is why she was fascinated to see those pictures.

**Question 6.** Bholi found her teacher to be different from others. How?

**Answer:** Others had always neglected Bholi. They made fun of her all the time. But, she found her teacher to be different. Her voice was calm, her manner comforting and touch was full of affection.

**Question 7.** What filled Bholi', a dumb cow, with a new hope in her? [CBSE 2015]

**Answer:** Bholi's first day of school brought a hope of a new life. She had found a loving and kind teacher. The teacher had inspired her and given her a book and had made Bholi feel confident about herself.

**Question 8.** In what way did the village change over time?

**Answer:** The village changed into a small town over a period of time. The primary school had become a high school. The village had a cinema and a cotton ginning mill. The mail train also stopped at the village railway station.

**Question 9.** What objections does Ramlal have to Bishamber's proposal?

**Answer:** Ramlal was not very happy with the proposal. He did not like the fact that Bishamber was of his age. He had a limp and children were quite grown up. It was not a very satisfactory proposition.

**Question 10.** Why do Bholi's parents accept Bishamber's marriage proposal? [CBSE 2015]

**Answer:** Bholi's parents accepted Bishamber's marriage proposal because they were happy that he was well off and had not asked for dowry.

**Question 11.** Why did Bishamber's marriage with Bholi not take place? [CBSE 2013]

**Answer:** Bishamber's marriage with Bholi did not take place because he had demanded a dowry of five thousand rupees from her father for the marriage. So, Bholi refused to marry him.

**Question 12.** Why was Ramlal thunderstruck?

**Answer:** Ramlal had always taken his daughter to be dumb. He was thunderstruck when she loudly asked him to take back the money and declared that she was not going to marry Bishamber because of his greed.

**Question 13.** The last line of the text talks about an artist and the masterpiece. Elaborate.

**Answer:** The 'artist' is the teacher and the 'masterpiece' is Bholi. It was her teacher who had turned Bholi into a strong and independent girl who was aware of her place in society.

**Question 14. What kind of mother was Randal's wife? [CBSE 2014]**

**Answer: Ramlal's wife was a traditional housewife who believed that daughters should not be educated, as it would be difficult to find husbands for them. She neglected looking after her Bholi because she was a slow learner.**

**Question 15. Why was Ramlal worried about Bholi and not about his other children?**

**Answer: All other children of Ramlal were healthy and good looking. Bholi was the only girl who was neither intelligent nor good looking. She was a simpleton, she stammered also. Ramlal was extremely worried about her future.**

**Question 16. Why did the Tehsildar come to Ramlal's village? What did he ask Ramlal to do?**

**Answer: The Tehsildar came to Ramlal's village to inaugurate the primary school. He asked Ramlal to set an example for others by sending his daughters to school.**

**Question 17. Did Bholi enjoy her first day in school? What made her happy on this very day?**

**Answer: It was a mixed day for Bholi. She was happy to see the girls of her age. She was fascinated with the colourful pictures on the wall of the classrooms. But when the teacher asked her name she could not answer**

properly and other girls laughed at her. She cried. But her teacher's soft words made her happy on this very day.

**Question 18. Why did Bholi look at Bishamber with cold contempt?**

**Answer:** Bholi looked at Bishamber with cold contempt because he had demanded 5000 to get married to her. Bholi saw how her father got humiliated; she realised that Bishamber was greedy and exploiting her father due to her look.

**Question 19. How did Bholi react when her father caught her by the hand to take her to school? Why?**

**Answer:** When Ramlal caught Bholi by the hand to take her to school, she was frightened. She did not know what a school was like. She thought her father was turning her out of the house. She shouted in terror and pulled her hand away from her father's grip.

**Question 20. How did Bholi's teacher play an important role in changing the course of her life?**

**Answer:** Bholi's teacher played an important role in changing the course of her life. She was polite and friendly which touched her heart. She encouraged her every time and was affectionate towards her. The teacher transformed her into a confident person who could read, write and speak clearly. This gave her the required confidence. Moreover, teacher's appreciation and encouragement helped her overcome her own morale.

**Long Answer Type Questions**

**Question 1. 'Dowry is negation of the girl's dignity'. Discuss with reference to the story 'Bholi'.**

**Answer: A girl is an individual in her own right. Equal opportunities in life can help her become independent and strong. She is not a burdensome object to be given away with money as compensation. Thus dowry negates the girl's dignity and self respect.**

**The story 'Bholi' shows this in a dramatic manner. Bholi is thought to be ugly and dumb by her parents. So, they are willing to pay dowry to an old man with a limp. So that he marries her. Bholi, on the other hand, refuses to marry that man. She is educated; assertive and capable of taking care of herself. She dedicates her life to service of her parents and teaching at school.**

**Question 2. Bholi chose a dignified life of service rather than surrendering herself to a greedy old man for the rest of her life. Education provides the required stimulus to overcome one's personal barriers. Explain the role of education in shaping the life of a child with respect to the lesson 'Bholi'. [CBSE 2012]**

**Answer: Education is the answer to all social ills. Illiteracy and ignorance bring nothing but poverty, suffering and misery. Bholi lacks confidence initially because of her disabilities. She is silent, timid and weak in mind. Her ugliness and her stammer do not let her progress. She is afraid to speak as others make fun of her.**

**School changes her life completely. It opens a new world of hope for her. Her teacher treats her with love and kindness. Her affection and support help Bholi to have faith in herself. She studies and grows into a confident**



young woman. She knows her rights and she asserts them as well. She refuses to marry a man who demands dowry. Thus, being educated changes the life of Bholi.

**Question 3. The chapter 'Bholi' highlights the discrimination against the girl child. Analyse.**

**Answer: Nature does not discriminate, but society does. From time immemorial the world has discriminated against the girl child. The chapter, 'Bholi' throws up many such instances. Randal's sons go to school and college. His daughters are not educated but married off. Her mother does not think it necessary to take Bholi's consent for her marriage. The groom is old and lame. Still he demands dowry. Her father is ready to pay him also. It is the girl herself who raises her voice against this marriage. She is criticised and humiliated for standing up for her dignity. But she is firm and decides the course of her life.**

**Question 4. Bholi is a child different from others. This difference makes her an object of neglect and laughter. Elaborate.**

**Answer: Society does not tolerate difference very easily. Bholi is not like others. She is slow for her age. She stammers when she speaks. Small pox leaves her all covered with pock-marks. As a result, she has to suffer a lot.**

**Her parents do not even bathe her. She is ignored and neglected. They take her only as a burden. People laugh at her. Children imitate her when she speaks. So, she remains silent most of the time. She has no confidence or self esteem.**

**Society must realise that it must accept those who are " different. They must be treated with the same love and respect as others.**

**Question 5. "Put the fear out of your heart and you will be able to speak like anyone else". These words of encouragement from the teacher highlight that change of social attitude and encouragement can help a child like Bholi to become confident and face the world bravely. Taking help from the lesson 'Bholi' write how the social attitude towards Bholi made her an introvert. What should be done to help such children to face the world bravely?**

**Answer: Bholi suffered a weak mind due to her accident (falling from her cot) during her infancy. She also started to a stammer while speaking. Then she became ugly due to pock-marks on her face and body on contracting the smallpox disease. All these made her family and other children treat her badly, resulting in her becoming an introvert. To help such children face the world bravely, we must treat them with love and affection and encourage them to join mainstream society. We must not mock their disabilities; instead we should give them hope that they can be as good as the other children by motivating and uplifting them.**

**Question 6. School education turned Bholi from a dumb cow into a bold girl. How did she save her father from a huge expense and become his support in his old age?**

**Answer: Ironically, Bholi was sent to school as her mother believed she was a burden and let the teachers at the school worry for her. The teacher showed affection and encouraged her to shed her fear. She was assured by her teacher that she would speak like others one day.**

Years of hard work transformed Bholi into a bold and confident young woman. Bishamber refused to marry Bholi due to her appearance and demanded five thousand rupees. Bholi saw how her father was humiliated for no reason. She refused to marry a greedy, mean and contemptible coward. She assured her father that she would serve him and her mother in their old age. She had a mission in her life; she would spread the light of education in her village.

**Question 7. Write a character sketch of Bholi.**

**“Bholi’s whole personality underwent a complete transformation towards the end of the story”. Explain.**

**Answer: Bholi’s real name was Sulekha but she was called Bholi, the simpleton as she was a backward child. She started speaking only when she turned five but she stammered when she spoke and as a result she was always mimicked or made fun of by the other children. Therefore, Bholi talked very little.**

**Bholi did not know what exactly a school was and what happened there, in the class when her teacher asked her name, she stammered and began to cry. She kept her head down throughout the class. The teacher was very encouraging and friendly to her and this made her gain confidence to speak. She started seeing a ray of hope for a new life.**

**After years of gaining education and with the help of her teacher, Bholi turned into a confident girl. She no longer stammered and could speak properly. She even had the courage to refuse marrying the lame old man because he was greedy and asked money from her father to marry her. On seeing her father worried about her marriage, she said that he need not**

worry as she would teach in the same school where she learnt so much and would take care of him and her mother in their old age.

**Question 8. 'Love and encouragement make the impossible possible. Explain this statement on the basis of the story 'Bholi'.**

**Answer: Bholi was sent to school as her mother thought her to be a burden. She was neglected by her parents as she was not beautiful and lacked intelligence. The teacher in the school asked her to tell her name. She stammered and began to cry. The teacher showed her affection and encouraged her in a friendly manner to put aside her fear.**

**Bholi somehow told her name. Bholi was surprised. The teacher asked her to come to school regularly. Love and encouragement shown by the teacher brought out drastic changes in Bholi's personality. Within a few years she became so confident that she refused to marry a greedy man.**

**Question 9. No one is always foolish. Time and circumstances give us intelligence and change out. personality. Explain with reference to 'Bholi'.**

**Answer: Yes, it is quite right that no one is always foolish. Time decides everything. Our maturity and knowledge depend on our experience. Experience is always based on circumstances. Time and experiences teach us different things and make life perfect.**

**With out experience or practical knowledge all bookish knowledge is in vain. It is never used. There are many such examples in our real life that prove this statement correct. Here I would like to share my own experience about a very simple doctor.**

**He started his practice very slow in a poor area. Many famous doctors made fun of him. Time passed and gradually he became famous in the neighbouring areas. His treatment was not so costly. Once a very serious accident occurred near his hospital and the people brought the injured person to a costly hospital.**

**But his condition was very serious and the doctor refused to admit him. Then that doctor took the case and tried his best to save him. At last he succeeded. All were surprised to see and listen to it.**