

Adolescence Education: Exploring strategies for educational interventions through open learning in context of SAARC nations

Bangladesh

Introduction and Background

A large number of populations in the country belong to adolescent category. If we follow WHO definition (10-19) they constitute majority as an age group- about 23% of total population. Their development as productive and responsible citizens of tomorrow is a necessary precondition for development of the whole country. So adolescent issues must be considered as a development agenda. Adolescent development is a multifaceted, multidimensional and complex issue. Development psychologists have described adolescence as a psychosocial transition from childhood to adulthood. The challenge is to make this transition smooth and successful. It is sometimes said that Adolescence is a territory that adolescents themselves and others also find perplexing and mysterious. Coping with the changes for adolescents becomes difficult and their smooth adjustment at family and societal level becomes a concern for all. It encompasses a wide range of issues beginning from mere physical growth to more subtle arenas like moral and spiritual development. Lack of knowledge / education, training and proper guidance/ counseling at this stage of life exposes them to risky behavior. All these also include, however, ensuring provisions for food, nutrition and health, education, appropriate training, sports and recreation, employment opportunities, and many more -in a word creation of a total enabling environment for adolescents. Consequently their vulnerability to unsafe sex, sex abuse, substance abuse, mental disorder, eating disorder, depression, boredom and many other problems and difficulties increases. Unstable emotions or lack of emotional

intelligence at this stage also lead to crime and delinquency. Considering all these psychologists have termed adolescence as a period of “storm and distress”. This transition period therefore demands great care, guidance and support. The special needs and characteristics of adolescents ‘demands co-operation and friendly attitude. Everything must be handled with much care and delicacy on behalf of all the stakeholders concerned (like parents, guardians, teachers, GO/NGO/civil society, media etc.). It mustn't be forgotten that on the positive side the adolescents have a rich reservoir of energy and potentials for intellectual and skill development to contribute to social and economic progress. In Bangladesh unfortunately there exists no clear cut policy position or concerted, coherent set of programs aimed at comprehensive development of this vast population group. Till now both GO and NGO initiatives mainly focus on Reproductive Health and to some extent girls' education.

Demographic Characteristics

- About 28 million people fall into the 10-19 age category according to Census data of 2001.
- 53 per cent of the adolescents are male and 47 percent female
- 76 per cent live in rural areas and rest 24 per cent in urban areas

Marriage in Adolescence

- More than one third (36.4%) of the girls aged 15-19 found currently married.

- This indicates that early marriage persists to be very high, despite legal prohibition in the country.

Education

- Approximately 62 per cent of total adolescents (more than 17 million) remain out of school.
- A large number of those who enroll into schools are eventually dropped out from the system. The situation is even worse for the marginalized section of the population.
- About 37 percent of them drop out from the primary education cycle. At secondary level this percentage increased to 48. A total of about 1.5 million girls never enroll in school.
- Enrolment declines as age increases e.g. for 11-13 years it is 44%, for 14-15 years it is 27%, and for 16-17 it is 16% only.

Table-1: Estimated enrollment among adolescents in formal educator by age

Age	Population size (in million)	Enrollment Rate	Total Enrolled	Total Non-enrolled
10	4.35	0.84	3.64	0.69
11	2.18	0.44	0.96	1.22
12	4.20	0.44	1.85	2.35
13	2.38	0.44	1.05	1.33
14	2.76	0.27	0.74	2.01
15	3.14	0.27	0.85	2.29
16	2.16	0.16	0.35	1.81
17	1.75	0.16	0.28	1.47
18	3.52	0.16	0.56	2.96
19	1.39	0.16	0.22	1.17
Total	27.82	0.36	10.50	17.31

Labor force participation

- According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS data about 32 percent of all the adolescent population was economically active.

- The number of economically active population is about half of the number of out of school adolescents
- The rate is lower for adolescent girls - about 20 per cent
- Most of them are, however, engaged in household chore.
- The percentage of economically active among the 15-19 years age group seems low. This may be attributed to lack of provisions and opportunities for gainful employment.

Table-2: Economically Active Adolescents, by gender and by location (%)

Age	Male (n=14.71 m)	Female (n=13.10 m)	Total (n = 27.82 m)
10-14	33.85	19.73	27.23
15-19	56.03	20.15	39.02
All	43.33	19.91	32.30

Age	Rural (n = 21.03 m)	Urban (n = 6.80 m)	Total (n = 27.82 m)
10-14	26.63	29.25	27.23
15-19	42.80	28.68	39.02
All	33.96	28.98	32.30

Overall socio-cultural context

- Adolescents in Bangladesh experience immensely different life situation depending on their environment, which includes economic and social background of family and urban or rural setting they live in.
- Early marriage, discrimination in family and social life, dowry, domestic violence, social isolation, lack of awareness on rights and lack of autonomy in decision making are some of the major socio-cultural adversities that the adolescent girls are facing

A study by Dhaka Ahsania Mission reveals that

- Opinions of almost ignored at family life
- Very low level of participation in family decision making even if it affects their own life.
- Large number of girls has no social participation
- Very low Level of outdoor games and opportunities for recreations.
- Boys enjoy certain privileges due to gender discrimination however the situation is not very pleasant in the absence of proper guidance, support and provisions required for smooth transition to adulthood
- They are also ignored at family level in critical decision making, and in most the cases parents/guardians are found unaware of the needs for special treatment that boys of this age group need.
- As the boys enjoy some freedom outdoors they become increasingly alienated from family life thus increasing their vulnerability and/or exposure to risk.
- In general, for both boys and girls, the absence of recognition and awareness at all levels regarding special care and services that adolescents deserve tend to perpetuate their deprivations.

Analysis of Existing Scenario and Future Directions

- In absence of a national policy the existing efforts are less systematic and consistent/coherent
- The sporadic nature is more prominent, mostly donor driven and focused on sexual and reproductive health and to some extent on girls' education
- It appears that urgency of a comprehensive adolescent development as part of national

development strategy is yet to be fully realized by the relevant major stakeholders (GO/NGO civil society/development partners)

- GO has National Child Policy, National Youth Policy and runs two separate ministries for implementing programmes for children, youth and women but adolescent population group is not targeted separately
- Also definitional inconsistency put a large number of adolescent out of purview of these two ministries
- Role of NGO sector is laudable particularly in promoting ARH issue but most of them are yet to start working with a broader perspective
- The development partners are also working on sector approach. Their areas of prioritization also do not include comprehensive adolescent issue
- The existing laws of the land are not adolescent friendly, are inadequate to play a supportive role to ensure their proper development and needs drastic overhauling
- Creation of new laws and creation of social mobilization/awareness for implementing those laws are also necessary
- Fulfillment of the Constitutional obligations and bindings as signatory of various international instruments can be a great step towards achieving adolescent development
- However, in recognition of importance of adolescent development a ministry may be declared as nodal ministry
- More important is to make an effective clear interministerial mechanism and establishing a mechanism for GO-NGO partnership

Different Non-Government Organization are being implemented Adolescents Programme through the following Institution

NGO	CLC	Identify	Stated Objective
BRAC	Kishoree Kendra (CLCs for adolescents)	Library organized at secondary schools or union council building	Reading facility for students beyond their schooling period
Save the Children USA	Lokakendra	Folk schools of informal type	NFE to children
Plan International	CLC	Center of diverse learning Opportunities	Functional literacy to young and adults
ActionAid Bangladesh	Lokekendra	Center for countinuing education	Empowerment of poor through literacy
Dhaka Ahsania Mission	Ganokendra	Library for rural people converted later into CLC	ANFE

Dhaka Ahsania Mission is working on adolescent issues since long. We have achieved lot. A Dramatic change has occurred in some communities especially for adolescent group. Following two case studies are carrying the positive manner of the achievements.

Case study 1

Name : Mst. Halima Akter
 Father's Name : Md. Rashid Mia
 Mother's Name : Mst. Delowara Khatun
 Name of Ganokendra: Papree
 Village : Middle Shilmandi
 Post : Middle Shilmandi
 P.S : Narshingdi Sadar
 Dist : Narshingdi



Description:

Mos. Halima Akter, a poor adolescent girl of a Poor family, was not able to continue her study after passing class three from nearby Govt. Primary School. Her father was unable to send her at school because of their financial insolvency. She grew very disheartened and felt pains for study.

At that period she heard about Papree GanoKendra and the activities of it. She requested her father to go to that GK and to get proper information from it. In the next week her father Md. Rashid Mia, went to Papree Gk and observed the activities of the EAST project. He became interested and talked with her wife

about sending their daughter into Papree Ganokendra. Her mother also agreed. In this manner Halima entered EAST project activities.

Halima says, 'I chanced to study at primary school but my luck didn't favor me to continue study'. Halima again gets chance to study. She was about to forget what she learnt at school. She started to read, write and calculate. Gradually she becomes able to revive her potentiality. By the side of study she knows about daily science, information and communication technology. She shows keen interest in the field of science, information and communication technology.

Gradually she grows more interested about science and usually came at CRC to learn computer. She learns about computer and its multi purposive uses. She informs their Social Teacher and Supervisor of the project. They help her get training on computer. Afterwards, she came regularly at SPCRC in time and asked a lot of questions to the trainer on computer.

Halima says, "I never heard of computer, let alone study and practice. 'She adds more', It is a great achievement and luck in my life to

operate Computer at CRC. Now, she know about computers its accessory's name, shut up shutdown, playing CD-ROM drive, operating floppy drive, writing down name and address in Bangle, painting etc different types of works. She can also play games especially. DX-ball. She likes to hear music and recitation of poetry.

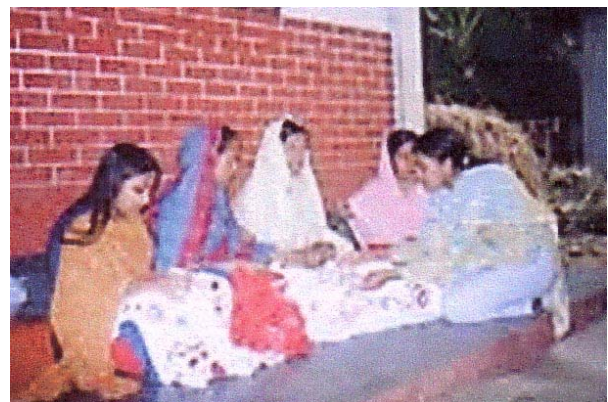
Indeed, the life of the poor and rural adolescents has been changed with the touch of EAST project. Science component an Information communication component makes a deeper influence over their life. The trained adolescents come at Shilmandi Papree Community Resource Center to operate computer. They are operating various learning compact discs English alphabet. Bengali rhymes, short stories, easy calculation, easy geographical descriptions of country & world, health & hygiene rules, various social malpractices and their reasons, human rights of duties, different newer technologies etc. The rural adolescents as well as the other people of the surrounding area are being feasibly benefited from computer. They get the blessing of science that comes through EAST project.

Ms. Sumi Akter became an Instructor of skill training.

Case 2

Name : Ms. Sumi Akter
 Father's Name : Md. Harun-Or-Rashid
 Mother's Name : Ms. Selina Begum
 Village + P/O : Middle Shilmandi
 Upazila : Narshingdi sadar
 District : Narshingdi
 Organisation : DAM

Sumi Akter is the learner of C-grade of 'Ajoy Ganokendra'. Her father is a laborer of a small factory and her mother is absolutely housewife,



Sumi's family consist of 8 members including 3 brothers and 3 sisters, Her father did not maintain their family in well manner by his

scanty income. They used to pass their days with half fed and half clad. Once Sumi has a sweet dream and great desire regarding education, she dreamt that she would be an educated person in the society. In fact, inspired of great desire, she could not continue her formal study due to their financial insolvency. Then she got admission at Ajoy Ganokendra.

After enrolled herself at 'Ajoy Ganokendra' she started to read different types of books on water and sanitation, environment, population, law & rights, skill development and income generation, women development, religion & ethics, social security, child rights, child and women trafficking prevention, human development, life sketch, country and society, history & culture etc. and learn a lot. She also received various training. These include: social empowerment, science in every day life, life skill development, hand knitting and training about mass culture.

Having received these training and through by reading different types of book, she learnt a lot and became aware. She helps her family member in keeping good health. In addition to that, she helps to her neighbor pregnant women and children in different health related problems and immunization. Furthermore, she advised for provide low cost nutrition food to malnourished children and pregnant women. Now she is maintaining personal cleanliness, she undertakes all these activities with great enthusiasm. She also has shown her great interest in hand knitting.

Sumi started hand knitting activities through the assistance of 'Hate Bonano Bangladesh' a reputed NGO working in hand knitting and handicrafts. She became able to show her expertise in hand knitting. Now, she is working as a trainer of hand knitting and frequently conducting training in different parts of Bangladesh. Now her monthly income is about Tk. 1500/=. Besides, she is receiving travel and dearness allowance.

Through this income, she can help her family. Now she is playing a pivotal role in fulfillment of family requirement as well as fulfillment of her personal demand. She opined that if all family members involve themselves with income generating activities than it will be possible to bring solvency through alleviate poverty. She also express her gratitude to 'Hate Bonano Bangladesh,' 'Ajoy Ganokendra' Dhaka Ahsania Mission and UNESCO.

Junior School Certificate Project (JSC) an initiative of BOU & CAMPE :

Bangladesh Open University (BOU) and Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) are being jointly implemented the Junior School Certificate project to create the education opportunities for primary education completed and same standard dropout and unprivileged learners. In the meantime curriculum and text books of class VI have been developed. From July 2007 project activities are being implementing in the field. In the piloting stage 6 NGOs have been selected. Preliminary 40 centers have been started. A total of 2000 learners will get learning opportunities through 40 open distant learning centres.

Challenges/Limitation

- No concrete adolescent policy for addressing/ accommodating the priorities and needs of the adolescent.
- Inadequate resource mobilization for implementing new and innovative approaches
- Inadequate human resources in managing implementation of quality education at all level
- Lack of dynamism and cooperation among the educational components and departments resulting in difficulties in framing coordinated effort for quality education

The Bhutan Experience in Adolescence Education

1. Scope and implementation of Adolescence Education

- 1.1 Bhutan is a small country with a population of about 650,000 of which 23% are adolescents (between the ages of 13 to 19) as per the report of health survey of Bhutan, 2002.
- 1.2 Bhutanese adolescents are in many ways fortunate as they are given comparatively better care of by the Royal Government of Bhutan. Most children between the ages of 6-18 get free education through the formal school system. There are schools established in almost all parts of the country so that children have access to education. Over and above what they learn in the classrooms, children are also given opportunities to participate in co- & extra-curricular activities organized by schools and other agencies.
- 1.3 A large part of the adolescence education is delivered through formal schooling system in the country.
- 1.4 The Department of Youth and Sports within the Ministry of Education take care of parenting education, guidance & counseling, comprehensive school health and reproductive health programmes in coordination with the Ministry of Health, games & sports, scouting programmes etc. which are all for the benefit of the youths in Bhutan.
- 1.5 For the benefit of those who have not been able to go to school for various reasons basic literacy programme in Dzongkha (national language of Bhutan) is offered through Non-formal Education (NFE) system countrywide. Although NFE Programme is meant for adults who missed their formal school education, about 25% of the NFE learners at the moment are youths between the ages of 14-24. As NFE Learners, they learn not only to read and write but also about life skills. The NFE curriculum topics relate to agriculture, environment, forest, related health issues, culture & tradition etc. which are closely related to their daily lives.
- 1.6 In addition, there are local NGOs like the Youth Development Fund (YDF), Tarayana Foundation, REWA (meaning 'Hope' in Bhutanese), RENEW (acronym for Respect, Educate, Nurture, and Empower Women) etc. who work towards helping address some of the pertinent issues related to adolescence.
- 1.7 Further, adolescence education is provided in a major way as part of the population education drive spearheaded by Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuck, the UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador. Major part of her campaign on population education is devoted to addressing pertinent adolescence issues.
- 1.8 Furthermore, RGOB has also recently started the continuing education system wherein both youth and adults avail the opportunities of furthering their school education. This will expand over the years.
- 1.9 It may also be pointed out that so far Bhutan has been fortunate not to have her adolescents exposed to noticeable situations of exploitation and violence. There are no reported cases of trafficking for prostitution, child marriages, child workers etc in Bhutan so far.

2. Sharing of practical experience- case studies and/or best practices

- 2.1 While we do not have grand success stories to share we certainly have learnt that there is no one best approach to deliver

adolescence education. It has to be done with a multi-pronged approach.

- 2.2 Even though there are no grand stories to tell, we have made some advances in the area a few of which may be worth highlighting. Population and reproductive health campaigns carried out across the country under the personal initiative of Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuck, the UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador is having a tremendous impact in the general population of Bhutan which includes a large population of adolescents.
- 2.3 The population and reproductive health campaigns initiated by Her Majesty the Queen has given rise to another important NGO – the RENEW which stands for Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women. It has been created by Her Majesty the Queen especially to address the welfare of the women and girls. It addresses domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual abuse, etc. through advocacy. It also provides livelihood/vocational skills. Although this is still in its initial stages, it is expanding owing to its popularity and appeal. It is living up to its name!
- 2.4 Tarayana Foundation created by Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck having its roots in the welfare of the less fortunate of the population has its own share of success in promoting livelihood of the poor through promotion of livelihood skills and cottage industries. This is fast expanding.
- 2.5 REWA meaning HOPE in Dzongkha is a rehabilitation center-cum-support group created by the Youth Development Fund being managed by ex- and recovering addicts. It is interesting to note in the sense that many addicts who have come across this center have recovered from being addicts and live normal lives. Despite its

size it is contributing substantially in helping people live normal lives.

- 2.6 Parenting education programme called the SPEA which is School Based Parent Education on Adolescence, which is fast expanding is worth mentioning. This is a programme organized by schools for the parents to support their children grow well. This has its own share of success.
- 2.7 National programmes such as the Scouting movement, reproductive health programme, career and general counseling have helped the system to provide adolescence education in more tangible ways.
- 2.8 Adolescence education provided through the Non-Formal Education system has also been successful in that adolescents have benefited both as learners themselves as well as from the parents who are the learners in the NFE system.

3. Challenges faced

- 3.1. Despite recognizable successes in the area of adolescence education, there have been huge challenges and others growing. The efforts have many times been constrained for lack of adequate technical expertise by way of knowledge and skills transfer and budgetary support. Dealing with both institutionalization and expansion has been difficult. An area of difficulty has also been to have adequate coordinated and collaborated approach.
- 3.2. In addition, the challenges ahead for Bhutan will be possessed by –
 - 3.2.1. Rapid social change.
 - 3.2.2. Rising cases of substance abuse.
 - 3.2.3. Growing cases of unwanted and teenage pregnancies.
 - 3.2.4. Rural-Urban migration which is

growing at an accelerated rate.

- 3.2.5. Comparatively high levels of youth unemployment.
- 3.2.6. Rising reported cases of HIV/AIDS infections in the country.
- 3.2.7. And many more.

4. Road ahead: Exploring Strategies for Educational Interventions

- 4.1. The current initiatives need to be recognized, consolidated, strengthened, coordinated, supported,

institutionalized, and expanded.

- .2. Besides looking for newer strategies and approaches for better efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability the school curriculum, Non-Formal Education programme, and scouting movement could be targeted for the purposes of strengthening their curricula and the mode of delivery.
- 4.3. The appropriate use of the print and broadcast media could be enhanced to broadcast and make available suitable materials on adolescence.

ASRH and EDUCATION in NEPAL

Context

Nepal began a peace process in June 2006 after an 11-year internal conflict. Following over ten years of conflict ending in 2006, the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord on the 21st November 2006 marked a new phase in Nepal's social, political, and economic development. The conflict resulted in an estimated 13,000 deaths. Consequently Interim Constitution has been enforced and interim parliament is now in place with the representation of rebel Maoist. Peaceful solution to conduct the election for the Constituent Assembly (CA) is being forged among the key political actors after the sudden postponement of scheduled CA polls scheduled for 22 November 2007.

Eleven year internal conflict resulted in an estimated 2 per cent annual decrease in gross domestic product (GDP). Average per capita GDP for 2004/2005 was \$297. The population is estimated at 26 million, 31 per cent of whom live below the poverty line. Disparities in wealth, opportunities and access to basic services exist between regions, rural and urban areas, genders, castes and ethnic groups. Socially excluded groups include Dalits, Muslims, disadvantaged Janajatis, middle-caste Terai groups, women and the disabled.

Nepal is one of Asia's least developed countries with a per capita income of USD 234 (World Bank 1998) and an estimated 31% of its 26 million populations living below the poverty line (NPC). Life expectancy at birth is 63 years. Between 2001 and 2006, the total fertility rate declined from 4.6 to 3.1 per woman and the contraceptive prevalence rate for modern methods increased from 35 per cent to 44 per cent. The population growth rate was approximately 2.25 per cent in 2001 and remains high. The urban population is growing rapidly.

Sexually transmitted infections and HIV are major concerns. HIV prevalence among the general population, estimated at less than 1 per cent, is concentrated among injecting drug users and sex workers. Additional risk factors include seasonal migration and the trafficking of girls to India. Seven per cent of sexually active women and two per cent of sexually active men report having had an STI and/or STI symptoms in the previous 12 months and about 200,000 new episodes of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are reported annually. Knowledge of AIDS is widespread in Nepal. Seventy-three percent of women age 15-49 and 92 per cent of

men age 15-49 have heard of AIDS. HIV prevalence among the general population is 0.55 per cent but is concentrated among injecting drug users and sex workers. Additional risk factors include seasonal migration and girl trafficking to India. In the far West of Nepal feminization of HIV/AIDS is becoming prominent with the returning of migrant husbands from India, particularly following the peace process.

Adolescents account for about 24 per cent of the population. Half of adolescent girls are married, and 21 per cent have at least one child. Maternal morbidity and mortality are higher among adolescents than among any other age group. Despite progressive policy reforms, the human development indicators of women and girls remain low, irrespective of caste, ethnicity and geographical location. Their participation in decision-making is minimal, and they have limited access to resources, basic services and information. Sexual and gender-based violence is widespread.

ASRH Current situation

Nepal's population is characterized by a young age structure largely because of higher fertility in the past. Nearly two-fifths (39.4%) of the population is under 15 years and an additional 19.4% is between 15 and 24 years old in the year 2001. According to the Population Census 2001, adolescents and youth (between 10 and 24 years of age) constitute about 32.5% of the total estimated population. The young population structure will be the main source of a large percentage of the population growth over the next 20-25 years before it may begin to decline. Nepal's young people are characterized by low school enrolment, early marriage and early entry into childbearing. Women aged 15-19 years old, who are mothers or pregnant with first child are 19% (NDHS 2006), and 25% of the married adolescent girls are either pregnant or already mother of their first child (NFHS, 1996). The

practice of early marriage (about 44% of the women aged 15-19 years are already married) is the major factor accounting for the relatively high proportion of teenagers who have begun child bearing, particularly in their late teens. Several studies reveal that both young men and women are ignorant of the consequences of their sexual behaviour and practices as well as its impact on their own life and the life of their partners.

However, in area of RHIYA project sites about 85% of girls less than 20 years of age are either pregnant or already mother of their first child (RHIYA Baseline 2004). Approximately 22% of married girls were unwillingly pregnant (RHIYA baseline 2004). Unmet need for FP is estimated at 25% for married girls.

Only 50% of the adolescent girls are literate, while literacy among adolescent boys is estimated at around 70% (NLSS 1995/6). There were only 17% of young people who had complete and correct knowledge on SRH (RHIYA Baseline Study). Only 18% received skilled care during delivery (DoHS 2001). Maternal mortality is high in Nepal at 281 deaths per 100,000 live births of which one fifth were adolescent girls (NDHS, 2006).

About 50 % of the young people have had their first sexual experiences by the age of 16 and below and only 15% of them had used of condoms at their first sex (RHIYA Baseline 2004). A recent study among unmarried 12-18 years old adolescents revealed that 22% of the boys and 9% of the girls indicated having had sex, and 52% boys and 32% girls indicated having had sex with more than one partner (UNICEF/UNAIDS 2001). And 16% of young people have had sex with a unknown girls or a sex worker (RHIYA 2004). The study also revealed that 13% of the sexually active boys and 13% of the girls ever had contracted a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

The number of HIV positive cases is estimated at 60,000 (WHO 2002). Now it has reached over

71,000. Among the HIV positive cases registered in Nepal 45 % were young people aged 20-29. And among the registered HIV positive 10-19 year old adolescents, almost half are girls (NCASC September 2007).

Nepal has a patriarchal society and domestic violence is common. Violence occurring against adolescents in Nepalese society includes domestic violence, sexual slavery, and prostitution, cross border trafficking of women, incest, and rape.

About 5% of young people were found to be victims of any form of physical violence and abuse (RHIYA Baseline Survey 2004).

Employment opportunities in Nepal are limited and an estimated 10% of girls and 21% of boys 15-19 years of age are unemployed (CDPS, 1995). Due to poverty and lack of employment, conflict and other opportunities for development in rural areas many boys and girls migrate from villages to urban towns in search of employment, and become vulnerable to homelessness, substance abuse and sexual exploitation.

About 18% of young people had experiences of taking drugs and drinking alcohol (RHIYA Baseline 2004)

Almost 25% of women have had their first birth by age 18 (NDHS 2006). 40% of 15-19 years old adolescent girls and 11% of adolescent boys of the same age group are married (NDHS 2001), and a fourth of the married adolescent girls are either pregnant or already mother of their first child (NFHS, 1996). Sixty percent of women are married by age 18. Women and men living in urban areas and those with higher levels of education marry later than their rural and less educated counterparts.

Adolescents and youths comprise approximately 22% and 19% of Nepal's total population respectively. Only half of the adolescent girls are literate. Nearly 40% of adolescent girls and 11% of adolescent boys of same age group are married. Fourteen percent

of all births in the country occur among adolescent girls. Sixty percent of women below 20 years of age with a live birth receive antenatal care at least once during pregnancy, while only 18% receive skilled care during delivery and less than 10% postnatal care (DoHS 2001). Unmet need for FP has been estimated at 36% for married girls 15-19 years of age (NFHS 1996).

The following data indicate the severity and magnitude of the problems of young people and their risky behaviours in Nepal. For example;

- The median age at first marriage among Nepalese women is 17.2 years and for men is 20.2 years (NDHS 2006).
- The first sexual intercourse among males occurs at a median age of 19.7 years and among females 17.2 years (NDHS, 2006).
- 50% of Young People (YP) experience sex by age 16
- A recent study among unmarried 12-18 years old adolescents revealed that 22% of the boys and 9% of the girls indicated having had sex,
- And 52% and 32% indicated having had sex with more than one partner (UNICEF/UNAIDS 2001).
- The study also revealed that 13% of the sexually active boys and 13% of the girls ever had contracted a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

The government is unable to reach this large vulnerable target group in all corners of the country and welcomes support from civil society to complement and supplement their initiatives.

So the **priorities** are the following:

- Low level of awareness on SRH among AYS and lack of appropriate youth friendly services
- Low level of awareness on gender-based violence and high vulnerability of female AYS

- Risky sexual behaviour and limited awareness on HIV/AIDS among AYS
- Limited programmes addressing AYRH needs and problems

RHIYA Nepal:

RHIYA Programme in Nepal had been widely recognised as one of the largest and successful ASRH programmes ever conducted in the country, executed by the UNFPA and implemented by 7 partner NGOs in 19 districts of Nepal with the funding support received from European Union from 2003 to 2006. RHIYA has complemented and supplemented the government initiative of ASRH in line with the National Adolescent Health and Development Strategy 2000.

One of the key strategies of RHIYA Nepal has been implementation of Peer Education programme in the project areas. In order to conduct the PE activity almost 500 Peer Groups were formed of 8-15 members from vulnerable and underserved communities especially out of school young people, covering each of the project Village Development Committees (VDCs) and municipality wards. Around 23,000 Peer Educators were trained on SRH and life skills that led the PGs and coordinated the IEC activities within their respective groups. The PE programme proved to be instrumental in disseminating and delivering the right information and education to the young people and encouraged them to obtain the Youth Friendly Services (YFS) in the community. This led to risky sexual behavioural changes among the youths and the use of condom and STI services substantially increased in the project areas.

Likewise RHIYA provided the ASRH training to the teachers from lower/secondary schools of the project areas in the districts. Around 150 teachers received 5 days comprehensive training

on student friendly teaching techniques and SRH which increased their capacity and capability to teach SRH topics comfortably and with confidence and to guide and support the young students on their SRH related activities in the respective schools and community.

Best Practices and lessons learned:

Many lessons have been learnt at the operational, management and strategic levels in

Nepal. Some of these lessons have already been shared.

Lessons related to project results and implementation:

- Local advocacy with community gatekeepers is important and effective in reducing obstacles to AYSRH work. Positive community attitudes can develop rapidly as parents and local leaders are keen to support youth development.
- NGO programmes are successful in reaching young people but may not be sustainable or suitable for scaling-up.
- Work with specific hard-to-reach vulnerable groups may be replicable but not feasible for scaling-up, whilst work with the general population of young people may have more potential for scaling-up.
- Models of information and service provision which build on existing organizational or physical infrastructure have a higher level of community ownership and are likely to be more sustainable.
- Partners (government and non-government organisations) can collaborate and pool their diverse expertise, while having common goals and indicators.
- The net effect of collaborative actions can

be very productive, however, joint actions need to be well planned, effectively implemented and closely monitored. Although collaborative actions produce quality outputs avoiding duplication and wastage of scarce resources and enhance cohesiveness among participants, the process can take much longer time than planned and expected.

- Involvement of secondary beneficiaries (i.e. parents, opinion leaders and teachers) is important in creating supportive environment as such support is the source of encouragement for AYs to participate actively in ASRH activities.
- Maintaining confidentiality & privacy found very important to make AYs ready to discuss their problems free of inhibitions. It is important to maintain confidentiality & privacy in the YFSDPs/YICs.
- Developing ownership feelings on AYs in the programme is very crucial for the sustainability. AYs participation in decision making process can help to develop feeling of ownership.
- AYs have consistently demonstrated a strong preference for active edutainment activities over more passive IEC tools. AYs typically respond better to well illustrated and pictorial messages rather than those relying primarily on textual contents.

Future Directions:

This programme has had a high level of support from conservative communities, demonstrating both the need and the feasibility of such an approach. Improved ARH has shown capacity to positively influence relationships between family and community members in traditional settings and needs are high with adolescents and youth comprising one third of the population in Nepal.

Key criteria for future interventions:

- Cost-effectiveness of models, their ability to reach key target groups, their sustainability and replicability profiles and their potential for scaling-up.
- Should have a clear reproductive rights base, particularly in countries where there are socio-cultural and political obstacles to promotion of AYSRH.
- More attention should be paid at the design stage to the development of realistic and useful indicators, and of monitoring tools which are results-oriented.
- Development of a national RHIYA strategy for IEC/BCC is essential, and there should be better links between demand-raising activities (IEC/BCC) and provision of services.
- Services should include emergency contraception, syndromic management of STI/RTIs and all family planning methods.
- More emphasis should be placed on coordination with the private sector and social marketing organisations.
- Interventions should be linked to projects focusing on income generation and development of life-skills,
- Active involvement of young people in the peace-building initiatives is inevitable
- Youth-Adult partnership and community mobilization
- Empowerment of young women especially in the context of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV)
- Management arrangements should be streamlined to reduce the proportion of project funds spent on administration, management and coordination.

UNFPA future programme on ASRH:

UNFPA has developed a joint plan to support the government programme on ASRH under its 6th sixth Country Programme Cycle 2008-2010. Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) has set an output to address the ASRH issues in Nepal.

“Increased coverage for adolescent sexual and reproductive health programmes and for HIV prevention in selected districts.”

Strategies to achieve the outputs: The appropriate activities will be developed and conducted to achieve the envisaged outputs regarding ASRH.

To deliver this output the first strategy will be to create a supportive environment for ASRH activities. A key activity will be orientation for community gatekeepers (teacher, both parents, local leaders, CBOs members etc).

The second strategy will be to promote and strengthen partnerships including with UN agencies particularly targeting the far West of the country. An important activity will be to assist sex workers in combating HIV-AIDS, ensuring the availability of condoms dissemination of information especially on the feminization of HIV/ AIDS and integrating HIV issues into RH services at the district level.

The third strategy is to increase participation of youth. Key activities will be (a) “choose your future” course for out of school girls; (b) providing support to peer education programme; (c) engaging with out of school boys and girls; (d) partnership with NGOs and other agencies involved in providing training for livelihoods.

The fourth strategy will be strengthening the technical proficiency of (a) health service providers in youth friendly ASRH services with an emphasis on adopting a positive attitude towards young people; (b) training of teachers

on ASRH and HIV AIDS using student friendly methodologies.

The fifth strategy will be to enhance the institutional and technical capacity of the districts in addressing ASRH and HIV/ AIDS. Key activities are (a) developing district HIV AIDS strategic plans; (b) strengthening HIV counselling and testing services in selected districts; (c) establishing youth information centres in schools, clubs and NGOs (d) piloting the implementation of prongs I and II of PMTCT in two districts.

Program Interventions for Adolescent/Youth

Key adolescent/youth RH issues that should be adequately addressed in interventions targeted at adolescents/youths can be summarised as:

- increasing adolescents/youths population in Nepal
- migration and displacement due to high rate of unemployment and joblessness among young people
- impacted by the armed conflict in past years
- gender disparity/in-equality, related to traditions and culture
- low age of marriage, especially among girls
- low level of literacy, especially among adolescent girls
- low level of knowledge and information on SRH issues among adolescents
- limited access to food and health care for adolescent girls
- unacceptably high maternal mortality rate due to too early and too frequent pregnancies
- high IMR among children born to adolescents due to low maternal age, short birth intervals, poor nutrition and other contributing factors

- low level of contraceptive prevalence among adolescents age groups
- increasing number of STD cases among adolescents (15-19)

National Adolescent Health and Development Strategy 2000

Goal: To improve the *health and development status of adolescents.*

Major Adolescent Problems and Issues as identified by the AHD strategy

- Lack of information regarding adolescent health
- Early marriage and child bearing
- Unwanted pregnancy and unsafe abortion
- Reproductive tract infection, STD & HIV/AIDS
- Poor nutrition
- Substance abuse
- Low education status
- Low employment opportunity;
- Sexual violence;
- Commercial sex;
- Girl trafficking;
- Child labor;
- Gender discrimination.

Strategies and interventions

- **Providing safe and supportive environment-**
 - Involving family and community
 - Establishing & strengthening legal provisions
- **Providing information and skills**
 - Providing uniform information package

- Providing skills for adolescent on communication and self development

- **Youth participation**
- **Inter-sectoral collaboration and co-operation**
- **Research**
- **Strengthening program management and development**
- **Emphasis on gender perspective**

Adolescence Education Related Programs Conducted by National Centre for Educational Development (NCED):

1. Introduction to Organization

National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) is an apex learning organization under Ministry of Education and Sports for the Human Resource Development (HRD) of all levels. In the context of government initiative for the professional development of human resources working in the education sector, an urgent need of a unified national institution was realized for the entire HRD in the field of education. Consequently, NCED was established in 1993 under the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES), with original mandate to act as a leading institution for developing and organizing HRD programmes targeted to teacher development, education manager development, and research studies. Secondary Education Development Centre (SEDP) and Distance Education Centre (DEC) have been merged into NCED in 2004 with an objective of ensuring coordinated and integrated provision regarding policy formulation and implementation of the HRD related functions. It leads to develop the capacity of professionals of schools to MOES system by building sustainable linkage and networking with the potential institutions within and outside the country.

Key Mandates for NCED

NCED has the following key mandates:

1. To recommend policy for strategic decisions on education including distance and open learning.
2. To organize and provide training for teachers, professionals and education managers working at various levels under MOES system.
3. To implement, monitor, follow-up and evaluate teacher education programmes and activities.
4. To provide accreditation and equivalence for teacher training programmes conducted by various organisations.
5. To conduct research studies on educational issues in general and on various training specific issues.
6. To provide professional and technical support based on information technology.
7. To establish institutional linkage with national and international training and academic institutions.

2. Programs Related to Adolescence Education

- a. Secondary Teacher Training
- b. Orientation on Adolescence Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH)
- c. Life Skill Based Health Education (LSBE) Program
- d. Open School Program

3. Secondary Teacher Training

Scope and Implementation:

The competency based ten month in-service secondary teacher training is funded by

Secondary Education Support Program (SESP), a project run by loan assistance of Asian Development Bank (ADB). This training is provided in six core subjects and one of them is Health, Population and Environment (HPE). Untrained teachers, who teach HPE in secondary level in community schools, are target groups of the training. This training is divided into 3 modules: 1st module (1 month training centre based and 1.5 months school based), 2nd module (5 months distance mode) and 3rd module (1 month training centre based and 1.5 months school based).

HPE is one of the six compulsory subjects in secondary school curriculum of Nepal. The training curriculum was prepared as per the secondary curriculum developed by Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) and on the basis of training need assessment (TNA) of HPE teachers and adolescent students.. CDC has already included the Adolescent, Sex and Reproductive Health (ASRH) in curriculum of secondary level. So, to match the school level curriculum and training curriculum, Adolescent, Sex and Reproductive Health (ASRH) is kept as one of the components of the training program. On the basis of training curriculum, trainer's guide, trainees' resource materials and self learning materials (in case of distance mode) are developed. Training programs have been conducted through 34 Educational Training Centres (ETCs) which cover all 75 districts of Nepal. Thus, nearly 3000 HPE teachers have got training during last three years. The aim of the training is to enhance content knowledge, pedagogical skills and attitudinal changes of HPE teachers so that they can apply learned matters in HPE classroom effectively. In this way, the ultimate beneficiaries of the training program are adolescent students (age 11 to 16) of secondary schools.

Best Practices:

1. School based teaching practice (1.5 months in first and third module):

After completing one month training centre based training, trainee teachers return to their respective schools and involve in school based teaching-practice. This part of training consist of series of activities such as action research, case study, project work, construction & use of instructional material, daily journals writing, involvement in physical improvement of school, organizing and participating the meeting with parents, community members, staffs, construction and use of test, peer observation, preparing reports of all the activities. Under this practicum activity, three workshops, each having three days, are also organized in respective training centres for facilitating the trainees. In the first workshop, they prepare action plan for those activities, in the second one, they share, get feedback and revise (if needed) and in the third, they present and submit the final form of the work.

2. Opportunity for interaction with facilitator through workshop in distance mode training:

In distance mode training, trainees study self learning materials. Besides, they need to involve in different activities like daily journal writing, project work, case study, action research, note making and materials construction and use. Under this activity, three workshops, each having three days, are also organized for facilitating the trainees. Trainee teachers can interact with facilitator about their learning and their assigned activities.

3. Provision of self learning materials, CDs, Cassettes for trainee teachers:

Each trainee teacher gets self learning material, audio cassettes, audio visuals and multimedia CDs. If they have no opportunity to use these materials at home, they can use them at training centres during the workshops. They can use websites of NCED, participate in phone-in program and correspond with NCED/ETC in case of confusion.

Challenges Faced:

- Proper application of training skills in real classroom practice.

Road Ahead

- Strengthening of follow up and support mechanism.

4. Orientation on Adolescence Sexual and Reproductive Health

Scope and Implementation:

In 2006, NCED provided three days' orientation on adolescence sexual and reproductive health to those teachers who teach Health, Population and Environment Education in Lower Secondary and Secondary Level in Community Schools of Nepal. They were also provided self learning materials of the concerned program. The orientation program include the contents like ASRH in school curriculum, status of adolescent population in Nepal, adolescence reproductive health situation and problems, sexual health and education, sexual behaviour, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, sexual and reproductive right, life skills and stakeholders' role in teaching ASRH.

This program was conducted for 600 HPE teachers of six PARHI (Population and Adolescence Reproductive Health Integrated) districts (Dadeldhura, Dang, Kapilbastu, Dhanusa, Rautahat and Siraha) on financial support of UNFPA. The orientation guide and self learning material were prepared by experts in the centre. The orientation programs were conducted in the districts by trained experts of the concerned district. Adolescence sexual and reproductive health related topics are included in school HPE curriculum, but teachers hesitate to teach those topics and want to escape due to lack of skills and attitude. In this context, the aim of the program was to enhance skills and attitude of HPE teachers so that they can teach adolescence sexual and reproductive health in school classroom effectively.

Best Practice:

- Focus on the need of adolescent students
- Focus on participatory approach

Challenges faced:

- Sustainability of the program
- Coverage of the program

Road ahead:

- Inclusion of the program in regular government training program

5. Life skills based health education training

Scope and Implementation:

Life skills based Education (LSBE) into the education sector has been started in Nepal in 2002 as a joint initiative between UNICEF and Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES). NCED took the leading role in managing and training central and district level resource persons on LSBE. The training of trainers (TOT) and teachers training were organized focusing on developing different life skills in students with a major emphasis on skills necessary for healthy living, preventing HIV / AIDS, drugs and other various diseases. Interpersonal communication skills, negotiation and refusal skills, empathy building, cooperation and team work, advocacy, decision making / problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, skills increasing personal confidence and abilities to assume control, skills on managing feelings and skills for managing stress are the major ten categories of life skills included in training package.

UNICEF has piloted LSBE nationally in public schools since 2005 in four Decentralized Action for Children and Women (DACAW) districts in first phase and other four districts in second phase. Similarly, in the year 2006, NCED provided TOT for 50 trainers and training for 950 HPE teachers of nine districts on LSBE.

NCED is going to implement this program to 1500 teachers of 36 districts in fiscal year 2064/65 (2007/8). After implementing this program 300,000 students (adolescents) will get life skills based health education in their respective schools.

Best Practice:

- Focus on adolescent students' health need
- Heavy focus on skills and attitude

Challenges faced:

- Application of training skills in real classroom practice

Road ahead:

- Inclusion of LSBE in regular training programs
- Strengthening of monitoring, follow up and support mechanism

6. Open School Program (Piloting)

Scope and Implementation:

The Open School Program is one of the innovative programs launched by NCED at the pilot scale in certain districts of the country. Under this program, five open schools have been established-one in each region respectively covering 150 students. Initial piloting districts are Sunsari, Rautahat, Kaski, Banke, and Kailali). The program provides enough academic support to the students who have passed grade- eight and are preparing for the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination even without attending formal schools. The self learning materials and audio lessons are developed based on the curriculum developed by CDC which includes Health Population and Environment as one of the six compulsory subjects. The activity is supposed to be expanded in accordance to the result of the piloting.

Best Practices:

- Priority to those students who are poor, disadvantaged, female, labour, deprived of school going opportunity, conflict affected, economically, socially, geographically backward.
- Provision of 100 hours contact sessions (five times - having four days, in each academic year): Subject teachers facilitate students during the contact session. Students can share their experiences and facilitators focus on the learning problems faced by the students.
- Broadcasting of 172 audio lessons from local FM radios.
- Each student get self learning materials in each school subjects including Health Population and Environment (HPE)

Challenges faced

- Lack of separate curriculum

Road ahead

- Expansion of the program in massive scale and provide opportunity to all students who are deprived of opportunity of formal schooling.

Reproductive Health (RH) Education Related Programs Conducted by Non-formal Education Centre (NFEC):

Context

International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994 agreed educational and health needs as prerequisites to empower women and other people in the world community. Altogether 179 countries, including Nepal, expressed their firm commitment to education and health. In 2000, leaders of 189 countries agreed on Millennium Development Goals (MDG) one of the main aims is to reduce maternal and child death, curbing HIV/AIDS.

Government of Nepal, in a planned way, has

worked for proper management of population since very beginning of five year development plans. So, the ninth development plan (1997-2002) was developed with vision of 20 year long term plan, which aims at reducing the total fertility rate to the replacement level. Moreover in tenth five year plan, the following strategies have been stated to link them to developmental activities having small and quality life.

1. Reproductive health services will be made easily available and late marriage and breast feeding will be encouraged.
2. Emphasis will be given to raise the public awareness extensively in the management of population.
3. Policy will be taken to conduct special programs targeting to adolescence and adults (10-24 years).
4. Population management will be made effective by carrying out review and policy reform of the laws related to population.
5. Emphasis will be given to raise the women's family and social status to enhance women's skill and employment opportunities, women's literacy and girl's education.
6. The role of the educational institutions in the formulation and implementation of population programs will be increased substantially.
7. The policy of getting higher participation of local bodies according to the concept of decentralization while carrying out population management programs will be adopted.
8. The policy of carrying out population management activities jointly with private and nongovernmental sectors be adopted.

Keeping the population development strategy and notion of International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in view, an agreement was made between the government of Nepal and UNFPA in 2003 to

launch the program like “Integrating Reproductive Health Issues into Non-formal Education Program” to address the reproductive health problems in country. The major objective is to integrate the reproductive health issues into non-formal education training programs (training curriculum and training packages) for governmental and nongovernmental implementing agencies.

Programs

Non Formal Education Centre (NFEC), under the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES), primarily focus on literacy classes for children who are between 8-14 years age groups as they are deprived from formal education. NFEC has been integrating the reproductive health issues in non formal education program in line with Adolescent Reproductive Health and Development Strategy 2002. Various organizations have been involved in the implementation of reproductive health education by integrating it in their training programs.

Those organizations are:

- Livestock Service Training and Extension Directorate (LSTED), Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative
- Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation,
- Directorate of Agriculture Training, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperative
- National Federation of Community Forest Users (FECOFUN)
- National Federation of Saving and Credit Co-operation Society Ltd (NEFSCUN) and
- National Resource Centre for Non-Formal Education

Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEC) has been an apex coordinating agency to facilitate the activities of these various institutions with the technical and financial assistance of UNFPA.

For this, the provision of project coordination committee has been made which is chaired by the director of NFEC to review the project activities and provide necessary suggestions to implementing agencies for the improvement of the program. The project is engaged in implementing the following activities.

1. Revision of the existing non-formal education training modules on RH to integrate adolescence sexual and reproductive health issues in line with government Adolescence and Development Strategy.
2. Integration of reproductive health and adolescence reproductive health issues into regular training of the implementing agencies.
3. Orientation to the program managers on reproductive health issues to make them aware of reproductive health issues in non-formal education program.
4. Training to instructors on reproductive health issues to develop them to train mid-level trainers and technicians of the implementing agencies.
5. Orientation/training to front line workers and awareness raising at the community level.

Progress and Achievement

Year 2006

All partner agencies, involved in the implementation of reproductive health program gave orientation to senior level personnel to make them aware of reproductive health and project. Training of trainers was conducted in the centre and district level. In order to facilitate training, NFEC has developed training guides and training packages. NFEC has developed Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials and translated in different local languages like Newari, Tamang, Maithili.

NFEC and other partner agencies conducted awareness raising and training sessions throughout the country in 2006.

1. RH in adult literacy:

In Udayapur district, 256 facilitators of adult literacy have conducted literacy classes and from these classes altogether 5120 participants are directly benefited.

2. RH education and community learning centres:

NFEC trained 43 Community Learning Centre (CLC) mobilizers and 51 motivators on reproductive health in 2006 in Chitawan and Dang.

3. RH education through women literacy:

In the context of women literacy classes, 143, 7 and 115 facilitators of women literacy in Ramechhap, Udayapur and Bara respectively have conducted women literacy classes by integrating reproductive health (RH) issues in it. Training was effective to address the RH issues of community people.

4. RH education for JT/JTAs training:

LSTED provided training to its 50 field level technicians (JT/JTA). After the completion of training, these trainers conducted training for 125 farmers in 5 batches at their working areas. In addition they provided counselling to their clients about the RH in course of meeting.

5. RH education in farmers groups:

The field level technicians of agriculture were also trained on RH as trainers, who in turn, were, involved in 3 days training of leader farmers on RH.

6. RH education through Forest Guards:

Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation conducted training for 2 batches of forest guard in Pokhara and Kathmandu. In two batches 50 forest guards were trained on RH.

7. RH education through forest users' groups:

The FECOFUN and NEFSCUN also have conducted training for leader farmers and members of the community groups on the RH issues.

8. RH in alternative schooling program:

NFEC trained 55 Alternative Schooling Program (ASP) facilitators on reproductive health in 2006 in Chitawan and Dang.

9. RH education in income generating programs

NFEC provided RH training to income generating group's motivators. In Chitawan, 5 motivators were trained on the issues who were involved in awareness raising program on RH among their group.

10. RH education through saving and credit cooperative society

The leaders of Saving and Credit Cooperatives are trained by trainers on RH and training methodology. After 3 days intensive training they were also provided the training packages and a variety of IEC materials for their study and use. After the training, they were involved in the organization of the awareness campaign among the members of saving and credit at the local level.

Year 2005

The progress and achievement of 2005 can be summarised in the following points:

- Formation of Project Coordination Committee (PCC)
- Orientation to PCC members
- Orientation to senior officers of implementing agencies (482 persons)
- Review of the training curriculum and training packages for RH integration: Review workshop
- Master trainers' training on RH (463 persons)
- Mid level trainers' training (1332 persons)

- NFE facilitator training (1016 persons)
- Training for awareness (31763 persons)
- Training to focal persons (in Thailand)
- Development of educational materials (TOT guide line, Training modules, Brochure, Wall chart, Poster, Reference materials)
- Celebration of World Population Day.

Lesson Learned

Year 2006

- The materials developed in local language as well as in local context seem more effective in delivering the RH messages to the participants of literacy classes and training programs.
- The interaction between beneficiaries and health workers see more effective at the local level to erase any misconceptions regarding health workers and the RH services. It was equally important to generate the demands of RH services at the local level.
- Policy reform to incorporate RH issues into their training programs at all levels can contribute to minimize the problems at community level.
- Integrated types of IEC materials developed keeping the local context in view to initiate lively discourse at the local level were seen more effective to deliver the RH messages to the local people.

Year 2005

- Extensive distribution of reading as well as training materials on RH to farmers and resource persons can increase the awareness among them so that they can internalize and build confidence on the officers and field trainers to conduct training and disseminate the messages
- Integration of RH into non-formal education for its sustainability is necessary. For this, the training policies of agriculture, live stuck and forestry need to be reviewed

to incorporate the vision of RH explicitly into training materials, which has been envisaged by project.

- The training duration fixed for TOT for the officers seems too short. The content coverage is also not so encouraging. Therefore, these need to be kept in view to maintain balance in terms of time set for TOT and content coverage.
- Distribution of reference materials to the trainers is very effective. The trainers can get more ideas and techniques for the infusion of RH messages into their own training contents.
- The monitoring visits to program sites is also effective to ensure how the program is running in the field level to make the RH messages access to the target groups through the identified channel. The field trainers and social workers also get the opportunities to correct their activities on time

Best Practices

- Timely review of training curriculum and packages for the integration of RH issues
- Partnership and coordination with other agencies
- Development and distribution of IEC materials

Challenges Faced

- Sustainability of the programme
- Coverage of the training program
- Application of training skills
- Coordination at district level
- Joint monitoring visits
- Development of IEC materials, reference materials and training materials in local languages

Road Ahead

- Main streaming of RH education in regular programs

OPEN LEARNING:

A New horizon for Adolescence Education in Pakistan

Syed Sadaqat Mehdi and Muhammad Arshad

Registrar (Academics), Virtual University of Pakistan, M.A. Jinnah Campus, Defence Road, Lahore and Deputy Secretary (Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education), Government of the Punjab, 135-B, Shadman-II, Lahore- Pakistan, respectively.

e-mail: Sadaqat_mehdi@yahoo.com, drmarshadds@hotmail.com

1.1 Definition and meaning of Adolescence:

The word *Adolescence*, derived from Latin the verb *adolescere*, meaning “to grow into adulthood”. Adolescence is a time of moving from the immaturity of childhood into the maturity of adulthood. This transition involves biological, social, emotional and psychological changes. In fact the biological changes are the easiest to measure objectively. Dictionary (www.answers.com/library/Dictionary) meaning of ‘Adolescence’ is a transitional period of development between youth and maturity. The exact period of adolescence, varies from person to person and also vary by culture. Thus timing of physical maturation varies widely. The life experiences of adolescents vary widely, depending on gender, socio-cultural setting, community norms, rural/urban domicile, presence of peace/conflict, economic and social disparities, and access to information, education and learning. However, almost all adolescents, regardless of race or class, undergo similar biological changes.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescence as the period of life between 10 and 19 years of age (Goodburn and Ross, 1995). Adolescence” (developmental stage between childhood and adulthood) can be a very difficult time for “adolescents” (teenagers) and especially

their parents. Nearly 30 million people in Pakistan are between the ages of 10 and 19 years (Durrant, 2000), that comprised largest group of adolescents in the country. According to the 1998 survey (Government of Pakistan, 1998) there are 56 million children under the age of 15; 13 million are in the age bracket of 15-19; while another 11 million are between 20-24 years old. Internationally speaking, it is estimated that by 2050, the proportion of children/young adolescents and older will become equal. The traditional age of full maturity in Pakistan is 18 when they are legally allowed to vote until this age. However, Adolescence age in Pakistan is believed to be between the ages of 13 and 21 years.

1.2 Adolescence Education - Achievements & Prospect in Pakistan:

Pakistan is a developing country and has lots of challenges with comparatively less resources to overcome these. There are widespread gaps in the education opportunities to meet adolescents’ needs. Most adolescents are confronted with uncertainty and confusion, as there are very limited and reliable sources to turn to when it comes to finding answers to their questions. The Government of Pakistan is trying its utmost to put the country on the track of the development in order to provide better facilities in education, health and other social sectors. Several non-governmental organizations are eager to join hands with the Government for creating programs of adolescent Education. Similarly Community Based organizations and other development agencies like World Bank, Asian Development Bank, United Nations Development Program, UNESCO, UNICEF, ODA, JICA, OPEC and others are contributing to improve low levels of education and productivity in rural areas. The focus of these

programs includes poverty of families, child labour, infant malnutrition, health issues, social and cultural situations, agriculture, problems like drugs, AIDS and environment etc. Both educational

modes (Formal/Non-formal) are being used to address the gaps. We believe that Radio, TV and other sources may play vital role in supporting to fill up the gaps in education particularly adolescence education. Presently TV and in particular FM radios are playing pivotal role for social mobilization and promoting adolescent education.

The Government of Pakistan considers illiteracy as the main root cause of all types of social disorders like poverty. We believe that literacy would serve as facilitator for eradicating social backwardness and may lead to the empowerment of people with the ultimate improvement in productivity benefiting the nation. It further helps to channelize the individual's potential towards the national economy culminating at the eradication of poverty and developing a welfare state. Education and Development both are aimed at empowerment of the masses to develop capacity to have a better control over their lives and surrounding resources. Well structured poverty sensitive adolescent education program in formal and non-formal systems including life and earning skills, may suit the situation of developing countries like Pakistan. Therefore, empowering the adolescents with basic literacy, life and earning skills, aiming at their economic self-reliance in addition to developing self-esteem and enabling them to actively contribute towards the social and political activities, is the major strategy of the government. Devolution of powers under Local Government Ordinance 2001 and reforms programme by the federal, provincial and district governments have laid a solid foundation to adopt poverty reduction strategies for achieving long term sustainable economic development in the country. The Government's medium term objectives includes

to achieve 100% literacy rate through activating formal setup, covering its backlog by non-formal sector and launching poverty sensitive adult literacy programmes to:

- Reduce Gender & Rural Urban Disparities.
- Facilitate Community (NGO involvement).
- Ensure access to basic Education by adopting NFE option linked with poverty alleviation strategy
- Support initiatives of formal education towards achieving UPE by adopting NFBE option.
- Integrate all basic education and literacy programmes with life and marketable earning skills.
- Providing purposeful & market oriented quality higher education of international standards.

All of the above benefits are based on developing and implementing realistic and demand based Programmes. Open Learning in Pakistan has its scope in two major areas that are Basic & Vocational Education, and higher education.

2 Adolescent Education through Open Learning – current scenario.

There are three major institutions that are providing education of various natures to the people of Pakistan through open learning system.

2.1 Aga Khan University - Karachi.

Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) is committed to developing alternative modes of programme delivery, particularly through open and distance learning. Consultations with both Aga Khan Educational Services (AKES) and government representatives reinforce the immense importance of distance learning in meeting students' needs. In recognition of this, AKU-IED

has set up an Open Learning Unit which facilitates the design and development of independent learning materials for teachers. These materials are used in both on campus and distance learning programmes, and provide teachers and educational leaders with a wider range of opportunities to obtain appropriate qualifications and acquire professional knowledge and skills to build their careers.

The distance learning programmes are based on the goals of increased flexibility in learning and increased access and independence for learners. Learners are provided with comprehensive independent learning resources to study and learn in a flexible way. Learning resources normally include study guides, course outlines, readings from books or journal articles and audio/video materials. Wherever course participants have access to a computer with Internet connection, they are encouraged to engage in e-activities via Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) called IEDOnline. These resources are designed and developed by AKU-IED faculty, in coordination with the Instructional Designer, on the principles of active, collaborative and reflective learning to enable participants to apply their learning in the workplace. Occasional face-to-face seminars are also held in Professional Development Centers.

2.2 Allama Iqbal Open University - Islamabad.

Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) was established under the Act of Parliament, which was approved in May 1974. It is the 2nd Open University of the world and the first of its kind in Asia Pacific having its main campus in Islamabad and more than 30 Regional Campuses/Centres spread all over Pakistan. Distance education model has been successfully used by AIOU. It has established a multimedia, multilevel and a multi-method teaching system. The university has been able to offer courses from literacy to PhD level. With its system of reaching the students at their homes or work places and the concept of openness, implying *life-long*

education, the university is filling the gaps left by the conventional face-to-face system and taking education to areas and group unable to benefit from the formal education system. The main objectives of the AIOU are: to provide facilities to people who cannot leave jobs and home for their educational uplift; to provide facilities for the training of teachers, to provide for instruction in such branches of learning technology or vocation and to make provision of research and for the advancement and dissemination of knowledge etc. It offers a wide range of study programs in the area of teacher education, science, business management, languages, computer science etc. The university has also developed a number of short term educational programmes. At present, AIOU relies heavily on various types of available media to teach students in an effective manner.

2.3 Virtual University of Pakistan.

The Virtual University of Pakistan was established by the Government in 2002 and it aims at raising the standard of higher education in Pakistan by providing high quality, easily accessible and affordable world-class education to students from all regions through the utilization of the latest Information and Communication Technologies.

2.3.1 Mode of Education: The Virtual University develops its courses by utilizing the services of the best available professors in the country. The University owns and operates its own four channels VTV-1, VTV-2, VTV-3 and VTV-4, collectively known as the Virtual University Television Network (VUTV). The lecture transmission schedule is updated weekly and displayed on the Virtual University web site (<http://www.vu.edu.pk>) under the "student services" link. These free-to-air channels may be received by using a simple digital receiver and solid dish antenna of 8 feet size. Several cable operators also carry these channels nationwide and more are expected to do so in the near future. Students attend their lectures either at Virtual Campuses or from home.

Interaction amongst students or between students and their teachers happens over the Internet. Students registered at Virtual Campuses are provided computer and Internet facilities while those studying from home have to have access to a computer with an Internet connection at home. A comprehensive Learning Management System (LMS) running on the Virtual University's web servers allows the students to access study materials around the clock over the Internet. A custom developed Moderated Discussion Board (MDB) within the LMS allows students to interact effectively with their tutors. All assignments are handed out and submitted through the LMS and access to all relevant reading material is also provided on-line. In addition to being broadcast over the University's television channels, video lectures of all courses are also available on multimedia CDs at a nominal cost (<http://bookshop.vu.edu.pk>). The CDs enable students to review lessons at any time and at their own pace. Printed lecture handouts/notes are also available at nominal cost to students.

Examinations are conducted by the Virtual University of Pakistan in a formal proctored atmosphere. Exams centers are announced, examiners and invigilators appointed and then examinations conducted either electronically or off-line at these centers in a strictly proctored environment. Currently there are more than one hundred virtual campuses spread all over Pakistan. The majority of these have been established in association with the private sector while the University itself operates 12 campuses and more to be added. These virtual campuses provide the required infrastructure for attending classes, accessing the Learning Management System and for conducting proctored examinations. These campuses also act as satellite administrative centers for VU students.

2.3.2 VU-CPL (Virtual University of Pakistan-Computer Proficiency License): VU-CPL is a suit of interactive training CDs that has been developed by the Computer Science

and Graphic departments of the Virtual University of Pakistan. It is designed to give the introduction to the usability of computers and to comprehensively provide training for the basic software applications and the awareness of the Internet and the Web. The whole VU-CPL suite consists of six modules i.e.

Module 1: Introduction to computers

Module 2: Managing Files

Module 3: Microsoft Word

Module 4: Microsoft Excel

Module 5: Microsoft PowerPoint

Module 6: Internet and communication

These above-mentioned modules deliver the training contents using multimedia for the basic application software on compact disks. These CD (compact disks) contain interactive contents, such as lessons, exercises and assessment question that would enable the user to determine the level of skills they have achieved after each lesson. The written contents are in English language; however the audio supporting the contents is in national language with tendency to include any language.

Objectives of the VU-CPL: These objectives are

- To encourage and promote computer literacy for all the citizen of Pakistan particularly adolescence.
- To provide a basic knowledge which will allow all people, regardless of their background, to be able to jump on information technology wagon?
- To raise the level of knowledge about Information Technology (IT) and the level of competence in using personal computers and common computer applications for all citizen
- To ensure all computer users understand best practices and the advantages of using

a personal computer

- To raise the output of all employees who need to use computers in their work

Benefits of the VU-CPL: Computer skills are becoming increasingly important to people in all walks of life. The VU-CPL is designed to benefit every one who seeks to get a starting point to hop up on information technology highway. i.e., it is intended for those who need to, or wish to, know how to use a personal computer, and is suitable for people from every work discipline, for people entering the job market, and for all ages. Some of the benefits of the VU-CPL are that it provides:

- An IT skills qualification for everyone
- A model for education and training in the Information Society
- A highly effective training delivery model, Using interactive exercises and self assessment mechanism
- Greater public awareness of the benefits of active participation in the Information

2.3.3 VU-CPL and other learning material for Adolescence education:

The Virtual University combines quality with affordability and strives at imparting knowledge across the nation and even abroad, also allowing the students of remote areas to brighten their future as well as contributing to the local and national economy at large. Students are allowed to access moderated discussion boards that contain questions (asked from students all over the country and abroad) and their replies. The lectures of courses are available on CDs for students and also to the users from other teaching institutions. This enables the students to review their lesson at any time. The Virtual University of Pakistan provides the entire lecture materials on its web site. In addition, printed lectures handouts/notes are also provided to students and to the users from other

universities/institutions.

University is planning to introduce VU-CPL to high school students (from age 14 onwards) with the help of Textbook Board established at Federal and Provincial levels. Textbook Board's responsibility is in the improvement of quality education at all levels through better quality textbooks at affordable prices and other learning materials for promoting Pakistan as a knowledge-based society. Textbook Boards help support the process of approval textbooks and learning materials for use in schools in their respective areas of jurisdiction. Distribution of VU-CPL would assist provision of training facilities for textbook and learning material development. Private schools are free in their decisions to purchase and use school reading and learning materials (other than textbooks); therefore Virtual University is also planning to have coordination with Pakistan Publishers & Booksellers Association for marketing and sale of VU-CPL at nominal cost. However, Virtual University of Pakistan would keep the responsibility to conduct VU-CPL examination (on quarterly basis) with nominal fee at Virtual Campuses, grading, compiling result and finally its certification to successful candidates.

3. Basic & Vocational Education - adolescent Education through Open Learning

School education in Pakistan has not taken appropriate forms of adaptation. There is lot many reasons for such a situation, of which scattered and diversified population is the major cause for children not attending the school or leave early. Approximately 40 percent children drop-out of school at primary level. These left-outs and school drop-outs has added to the pool of illiteracy to be mounted to about 40% illiteracy ratio in the country. The government is establishing adult literacy centers along with Non-Formal basic education schools to increase the Literacy rate up-to 64.8 percent, taking male literacy to 73.63 percent and female to 55.97

percent (Khan, 2007). The non-formal education is now receiving a growing awareness and acceptance as a dominant approach to education in the future. The 10+ years old adolescent and youth who have missed primary education are being given a second chance to enable them to complete primary education cycle in 2-3 years time.

3.1 Pakistan's vision & Education Policy in relevance to Adolescence:

The constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan enjoins upon the state to eradicate illiteracy and provide universal compulsory free education up to secondary level within minimum possible period. Pakistan is the signatories of World Declaration on "Education for All" with commitment to reduce adult illiteracy by 50% of the existing illiteracy rate. This commitment has been reaffirmed by Pakistan at various national and international forums.

The diversification of education is the main aim of Pakistan education Policy 1998-2010 wherein successful students of basic education who intend to join a profession will be able to opt for vocational schools. A separate stream of matriculation (technical) has been added to general education to improve the quality of technical education to prepare the adolescence for the pursuit of professional and specialized education or to enhance the chances of employment of technical and vocational education. Opportunities of joining technical education likely to be increased by providing better equipped and easily accessible polytechnics all over the country.

Secondary education (class 9-12) is an important sub-sector of the entire educational system. Secondary education is a stage where a student enters adolescence. Four years of secondary education, therefore, provide an excellent opportunity for the educationists to conceive and launch programs that initiate the learners into proper forms of behavior and attitudes. Components of languages, basic science, social

sciences, and at least one of the vocational subjects relating to computer, industry, business, agriculture etc. have been added in course curriculum of secondary education. The vocational components must have a variety of skill courses/trades to be offered according to the need. The level of the skills should be such that each student is competent enough or trained as semi-skilled worker for self-employment or employment in public or private sector. Vocational education is now being interpreted as a skill which prepares a student to respond to the call of practical life.

In the Education Policy 1998-2010, Non-Formal Basic Education and Literacy has been given due importance for the uplift of Literacy rate and arranging Basic Education for deprived groups of society. Non-Formal Education System has been found more feasible in settings like ours, for expansion of basic education. A complete Chapter (Chapter 4) in the Education Policy (1998-2010) has been devoted for Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education with objectives: to achieve the global objective of Education for All and All for Education, to complement and supplement the formal system to achieve the target of Universal Primary Education (UPE) through community involvement in the shortest possible time, to impart functional literacy for adolescent (10-14) who missed out the chance of primary education, to provide lasting functional literacy and income generation skills for rural women of 15 to 25 age group, and to provide the basic education facilities to working children and reduce child labor.

4. National Commission for Human Development (NCHD)

The National Commission for Human Development was created in July 2002, on the recommendation of the President's Task Force on Human Development under the Ordinance No. XXIX of 2002, dated July 19, 2002. Its mandate is to promote Human Development

through Primary Education, Adult Literacy and Primary health care. The goal of NCHD Literacy Program is to increase literacy rate to 86% by the year 2015 through Adult literacy Program at a scale to cover the back log, and thus help achieve literacy rate of 3.2 % per year. Increase net primary enrollment rate to 90% and reduction in dropout from 50% to 10%.

Salient Features of the Literacy Program of NCHD is to focus on women with emphasis on mothers (age group 11-45 years) and after completion of 5 months course the learner will be able to read and write. Able to read from simple text of Urdu/ Sindhi; to write 7-10 sentences about their immediate environment; manipulation of three digit figure that include add, subtract, multiply, and divide. Moreover, they can use literacy skills in their daily lives. Program also includes comprehensive and relevant teacher training program for 28 days.

5. Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department, Government of the Punjab.

Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Department was created in August, 2002 by the provincial Government with the vision to eradicate illiteracy from the Punjab. Following Tasks have been assigned to the Department:

- i) Promotion of literacy through Non-Formal means.
- ii) Research and development to achieve objectives of higher literacy rate.
- iii) Adult education.
- iv) Training of teachers and material development for Non-Formal Education.

5.1 Vision: Literate skilled, human capital, sustains economic growth, social development, civic harmony, gender equality, people empowerment and reduction in poverty and burden of disease.

5.2 Mission Statement: "To Make Punjab Literate by 2020."

Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Department since its inception in August, 2002 is actively pursuing the goal of eradication of illiteracy from the Province by adopting non-formal mode for educating the people, especially adults and children of most vulnerable and neglected groups of society including drop outs, left outs and those never been to school. The basic aim is to provide second chance to the children to cover the backlog left out of formal stream of Education. The Department has adopted all measures to cope up with Chief Minister's initiatives for "Parha Likha Punjab" in accordance with the vision 2020.

5.3 Organization Setup: Organogram for province and district is reproduced as under:

5.4 Projects and Programmes.

As the major role of this Department is to achieve 100% Literacy rate through activating formal setup, covering its backlog by NFBE and launching poverty sensitive Adult Literacy Programmes to:

- Reduce Gender & Rural Urban Disparities.
- Facilitate Community (NGO involvement).
- Ensure access to basic education by adopting NFE option linked with poverty alleviation.
- Support initiatives of formal education for achieving UPE by adopting NFBE option.
- Integrate all basic education and literacy programmes with life and marketable earning skills.

Some important achievements for the period 2004 to 2006 and in the current year are given as under:-

- (a) Literacy and Vocational Education Project under which 3224 Literacy & Vocational Education Centers were established in the province at cost of Rs. 93.76 million.
- (b) Early Childhood Education Project: 442

ECE Centers were opened with the aims of increasing retention / decreasing dropout through joyful learning.

- (c) Model Districts for achieving 100% Literacy: This is the first ever project of Literacy promotion being implemented through Federal Provincial & District funding in collaboration with JICA. The Project has been approved by the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) and ECNEC under Government of Pakistan Planning & Development Division, Islamabad at a total cost of Rs. 981.374 million.
- (d) Establishment for the promotion of Education and Literacy: The ongoing scheme are 875 Early Childhood Center in Punjab, 25 Centers in each District with the Objectives "to increase retention / decrease dropout through joyful learning and to increase learning achievements by increasing schooling period for the children of age group 3-5 years".
- (e) Establishment of Provincial Education For All Implementation & Monitoring Unit with the Objectives "to provide secretarial, administrative, academic, intellectual support for the achievement of EFA Goals and for the effective implementation & monitoring of development schemes for the promotion of Literacy & Education For All".
- (f) Literate Punjab Programme: Establishment of District literacy Management Information System (LitMIS) Cell. Establishment of 7750 Adult Literacy Centres (3-Cycles)-(250 in each of 31 Districts). Establishment of 3100 Non-Formal Basic Education Schools (100 NFBE in each of 31 Districts).
- (g) Up-gradation of NFBE Primary Community Schools to Non-Formal Middle Schools (3 cycles) Project with the

objective of providing opportunity of Continuing Education to the girls living in Remote Rural Areas of Punjab.

- (h) Establishment of Provincial Literacy & Non-Formal Resource Centers (LNRC) - Provincial & District with the objective "to provide institutional setup for teacher training and material development in Literacy & Non-Formal Education Sector".

Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department is dealing with the task of educating Adult illiterates and out of school children through Non-Formal means in order to bring them to the mainstream Education. The pedagogical techniques and the curricula of these programmes is entirely different and very demanding. The main reason behind the failure of the past Programmes of Literacy and Non-Formal Education was the lack of institutional backup and sustainable options. It is felt that an institutional arrangement should be made to look after the academic growth of the Literacy and NFBE graduates. The main objective of the Literacy and Non-Formal Resource Centre shall be the teacher training and material development for Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Programmes.

- Establishment of Provincial Literacy Management Information System (LitMIS) with the Objective "to Develop Institutional Setup for developing a Data Bank to provide decision support to the Policy Makers, Implementers, Administrators in developing and implementing Literacy Promotion Programmes".
- Crash Literacy Programme for rural women in Southern Punjab: Establishment of 1000 ALCs Centers for three years - 100 in each of the districts of Lodhran, R.Y.Khan, Rajanpur, Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Layyah, Muzzafargarh, Multan, Vehari and

Bhakkar with the aim “to provide Basic Education facilities to illiterate women alongwith useful life skills”.

- Post Literacy & Continuing Education Project: Establishment of 5 Post Literacy & Continuing Education Centers for Matriculation in Two Years. (Pilot Project in District, Faisalabad) with the Objective “to Provide Post Literacy & Continuing Education Facilities to the Girls / Women living in Remote / inaccessible Areas of Punjab”.

6. Elementary Education Foundation in NWFP

Elementary Education foundation is playing a leading role in the promotion of Education and Literacy through open learning / Non-formal technique. Non-formal schools for out of school children, Adult Literacy centers for adolescent and Community Learning centers are playing a vital role to bring upon a real social, economic and political change in the society.

7. Social Welfare Department and Directorate of Literacy & Non-Formal Education, Balochistan.

Balochistan being the largest area wise province has a major problem of scattered Population. To address the Educational needs of such diversified territory, distant learning and Non-formal schooling has proved to be the most effective. To address the existing pool of illiterates Adult literacy centers were established through federal support under Education Sector Reforms (ESR) Programme. The social welfare Department/Directorates of Literacy and

Non-formal Education along with national, Provincial and local NGOs is making all out efforts to achieve the goal of higher Literacy rate in the area.

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ADOLESCENCE EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN INDIA

A Response to Reproductive and Sexual Health Needs

Introduction

Adolescence is generally defined with reference to a period of years. It is considered a period from the age of 10-19 years. Some Development Psychologists consider it a period between 13 and 18 years (teen age), while others extend it up to 24. However, there is a growing consensus in favour of not associating adolescence with the precise number of years. Age alone is not sufficient to determine membership in the adolescent group. Adolescence begins with a period of rapid physical and especially sexual development called puberty. The physical changes and developments in physiological processes arise from the hormonal changes that lead to sudden increase in the activity of certain glands. All these changes are highly correlated with sexual development, as during this period significant physical changes take place in terms of development of secondary sexual characteristics. Puberty ends when an adolescent reaches reproductive maturity.

Adolescence, in fact, is a critical period during which significant personality reorganization occurs. The suddenness and rapid pace with which the changes take place in the body and mind of adolescents, have the potential to generate problems and special needs which adolescents find difficult to understand on their own. Although they observe and experience the changes occurring in them, they are mostly unable to understand these developments. So far there is no authentic source readily available to them, through which they can get scientific knowledge regarding these changes. Since they need information regarding the changes and developments in them, they fall back upon the peer group that itself is ill-informed or cheap literature which leads them astray. Being misinformed they fall prey to myths and

misconceptions which adversely affect the process of personality development in them and leads them quite often to risky and irresponsible behaviour.

Adolescents confront problems because of their inability to properly manage the sudden development of their interest in the opposite sex. The tendency to distance themselves from their parents and to become deeply involved with the peer group creates apprehensions and anxiety in them. In the absence of any well informed adult intervention to help them understand and appreciate the problems and issues, they turn towards the peer group. Generally adolescents are vulnerable to peer pressure and a number of them are pushed into action without giving any thought to consequences. Many of them are found experimenting with smoking, alcohol, tobacco or drugs and also with sex for various reasons including the peer pressure. These implications are reflected in the following profile of adolescents in India

Profile of Indian Adolescents

The current generation of adolescents in the world is more than a billion strong, and will be the largest generation in history to make the transition from children to adults. In India their number, according to 2001 Census is over 225 million in the age-group 10-19 years, constituting nearly 22 (21.8) per cent of Indian population and this number is growing with a definite possibility of making this country the youngest in the world in the near future. Although there are now policy initiatives to recognise them as a distinct population group, social environment is still far away from acknowledging their distinct place. More importantly, this large group is adversely

affected by nutritional deficiencies and lack of opportunities to get education in respect of specific health care and services.

Although the overall sex ratio has improved in the country from 927 in 1991 to 933 in 2001, it has declined in the age group 10-19 years from 890 in 1991 to 882 in 2001. Whereas the sex ratio in the age group 10-14 years indicates an improvement from 891 in 1991 to 902 in 2001, that related to 15-19 age group shows a decline from 890 in 1991 to 858 in 2001. There are significant state-wise variations, which is noteworthy. There may be a variety of reasons for the declining child sex ratio, the preference for male child leads to pre-natal sex selection, female foeticide and infanticide, malnutrition and discrimination against the girl child.

With the enhancing gap between onset of puberty and age at marriage, the incidence or possibility of pre-marital sexual activity among adolescents is on the rise. It is a fact that there are limited empirical evidences, but it is also a fact that adolescents are prone to risky behaviour in a fast changing world. Quite a few studies indicate that pre-marital sexual relations do occur. Unmarried adolescent boys are far more likely than adolescent girls to be sexually active. Sexual relations among these people tend to be characterised by multiple partners, casual sexual relations, coercion and non-consensual experiences (Jejeebhoy, 2004). It is also pertinent to note that adolescents have a substantial share in the number of persons infected with sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and reproductive tract infections (RTIs).

One of the major risks of irresponsible sexual relations is the spread of HIV/AIDS among adolescents and young people. Over 35 per cent of all reported AIDS cases in India occur among young people in the age group of 15-24 years and more than 50 per cent of the new HIV infections are taking place among them (NACO, 2005). The National Behavioural Survey conducted on young people in the age group

15-24 by NACO/UNICEF in 2001 informed that misconceptions on certain modes of HIV transmission are wide spread. Seventy three per cent of young people were unaware that a healthy looking person could transmit HIV infection. Only one in five respondents were aware that persons having sexually transmitted infections (STIs) had a higher risk of HIV infection. Among the injecting drug users, the use of sterile injecting equipment was lower among younger (below 19 years) respondents. Negative attitudes were found towards HIV positive persons. Only 41 per cent were thought it proper to share food with infected persons (NACO/UNICEF, 2001).

The fast growing incidence of smoking, drinking, tobacco use and other substance abuse among the adolescents is a matter of grave concern. The projected number of drug abusers in India is about 3 million and most drug abusers are in the age group of 16-35 years (UNODC, 2003). The data from National Health Survey (NHS) revealed that 24 per cent of the drug abusers were in the age group of 12-18 years. Nearly 11 per cent were introduced to cannabis before the age of 15 years and about 26 per cent between the age of 16 and 20 years (UNODC & Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2004).

Adolescent girls in particular continue to be the victims of gender-based discrimination. Not only the spectre of "missing girls" is staring on our face, the girls are also suffering on account of continued low social worth, malnutrition, early marriage, teenage pregnancy and unsafe motherhood (mostly within marriage), and also the increasing incidence of sex abuse (UNFPA, 2006). About 50.76 per cent of children have faced one or more form of sexual abuse (MOWCD, 2007). They are victims of crimes such as rape, kidnapping, abduction, trafficking, and domestic violence. In most cases the abuser is a family member or a known person. In 84 per cent of rape cases, the offenders were known to the victims and 32 per cent were neighbours (NCRB, 2001).

Adolescents: Policy Perspective

The realization that adolescents are a distinct and critical population group, was reflected for the first time in an international agreement, the Programme of Action that was adopted by the International Conference on Population and Development, 1994. The document stresses the importance of the health needs and particularly the reproductive health needs of adolescents, that have been largely ignored to date by societies and existing health services. It is now being increasingly realized that there is an urgent need to respond to the concerns of adolescents comprehensively and to ensure the support they receive from their families, communities and governments, so that they are empowered to take on adult roles and responsibilities which will determine their own future and the future of their countries.

The National Population Policy 2000 adopted by the Government of India categorically mentions adolescents as an “under-served group” and recognizes that their needs have not been specifically addressed in the past. It proposes to “ensure for adolescents access to information, counseling and services, including reproductive health services, that are affordable and accessible... and to provide them “ the package of nutritional services”.

The National AIDS Prevention and Control Policy 2002 expounds a number of policy initiatives in respect of HIV/AIDS. It states that in educational institutions AIDS education should be imparted through curricular and extracurricular approach.

The National Youth Policy 2003 of Government of India reiterates the commitment of the nation to the composite and all-round development of the young and addresses the critical concerns of adolescents. As it states, “educational curriculum in schools should include information on health issues, including reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and also population issues”.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005, a core policy document for school education, registers a paradigm shift in school curriculum that facilitates the integration of adolescence education elements in the content and process of school education. The following stipulations made in NCF 2005 are related to the needs of adolescents pertaining to the changes and developments that take place during adolescence. Development of life skills such as critical thinking skills, interpersonal communication skills, negotiation/refusal skills, decision making/problem solving skills and coping and self management skills, is also very critical for dealing with the demands and challenges of everyday life.” (p.40).

The document further mentions the concerns “related to social aspects of changes and developments occurring in them during adolescence like changing relationships with parents, peer group, the opposite sex and the adult world in general, need to be addressed appropriately. The responses to the health needs of children and adolescents/youth through policies and programmes at different levels are closely related elements of these concerns.”

Adolescence Education Programme

As a major policy initiative, Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) was launched by Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India in 2005 as a follow up of the decisions of the Inter-Ministerial Group. It is a comprehensive educational response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, by harmonizing and up-scaling three specific Programmes being implemented since early 1990s. Under National Population Education Project (NPEP) implemented by MHRD through National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), adolescence education has been a major component. Another Project on Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health in Schools was being implemented by national agencies: Council of Boards of School Education

in India (COBSE), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) was being implemented with the support from United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The third, School AIDS Education Programme (SAEP) was being implemented by National AIDS Control Organisation through State AIDS Control Societies in collaboration with State Education Departments.

The Department of School Education and Literacy, formerly known as Department of Secondary & Higher Education, MHRD has positioned Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. It is being implemented as a key intervention for empowering adolescents to deal with risky situations, preventing new HIV infections, reducing vulnerability to the infection and substance dependence and influencing positive behaviour development. It is designed as an early HIV preventive intervention by providing adolescents with information on Process of Growing up during adolescence, HIV/ AIDS and Substance abuse as well as developing in them life skills as the most effective way to stem the spread of the infection as well as substance abuse.

Adolescence Education Programme was developed through very wide consultations with not only state, national and international institutions but also with educationists, social scientists, psychologists, biologists, teachers and parents. It is focused on the needs of adolescent students. These needs are reflected in the **National Curriculum Framework 2005** developed by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and approved by the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE).

Needs of Adolescents and Educational Intervention

Adolescence Education Programme is focused on the critical needs of adolescents. It is

universally accepted that the health needs, and particularly the reproductive and sexual health (ARSH) needs of adolescents, continue to be ignored and neglected. As they stand at the threshold of adulthood, they need authentic knowledge that helps them understand the process of growing up in particular reference to their reproductive and sexual health needs. They have to be well equipped to cope with the problems which they confront during the transitional phase. They need guidance and independence simultaneously, education as well as opportunities to explore life for themselves in order to attain a level of maturity required to make responsible and informed decisions.

It is in this context that the need for an educational intervention has been strongly felt. This need is particularly felt in India, because the school curriculum here does not include the crucial elements of reproductive and sexual health such as sexual development during the period of adolescence, HIV/ AIDS and substance (drug) abuse. There are contents on the biological aspects of the reproduction system incorporated in the school syllabi and textbooks, but education in these elements cannot be complete by giving simply the biological information. There is a need to focus on physiological, emotional and socio-cultural dimensions of the adolescent reproductive and sexual health (ARSH) in a holistic manner.

Moreover, the greater need is to equip adolescents with life skills, so that they can cope with the challenges and pressures. After serious consideration for rather too long, now a consensus has been reached in favour of the introduction of adolescence education in schools with a view to providing authentic knowledge to students regarding the process of growing up, HIV/ AIDS and substance (drug) abuse, influencing their attitude, behaviour and value orientation, and developing in them the needed life skills.

With a view to making relevant educational

interventions in response to these critical needs, a conceptual framework needed to be evolved. As a comprehensive review of educational programmes on similar concerns suggested, the greatest challenge was to evolve a framework that would be in consonance with the Indian cultural settings as well as in tune with the existing school education system. The framework that was evolved through nation-wide consultations during 1993-96, encapsulated adolescent reproductive and sexual health concerns including HIV/AIDS and substance abuse concerns as its main elements, as these were not reflected in the school curriculum framework.

Framework of Adolescence Education

The present Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) has adopted the framework of adolescence education that was evolved as a follow up of the recommendations of the National Seminar on Adolescence Education organised by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in April, 1993 and operationed since then under the National Population Education Project. The framework no doubt has been informed by the urgent need for HIV prevention, it came up as an educational response to adolescent reproductive and sexual health (ARSH) needs. When it was being developed, a spontaneous tendency would have been to provide comprehensive coverage to all aspects of adolescent life. But as was realized, the school curriculum already incorporated several concerns of the adolescent world. A broad and all-inclusive framework would have resulted in avoidable duplication of educational efforts. The adolescence education framework, therefore, focuses on only those concerns of adolescent reproductive and sexual health (ARSH) that are not incorporated in the school curriculum.

Objectives of Adolescence Education
Adolescence Education aims at realizing the following objectives:

(i) To help students/learners acquire authentic knowledge about adolescent

reproductive and sexual health (ARSH) including HIV/AIDS and substance (drug) abuse;

- (ii) To inculcate among them healthy attitude and responsible behaviour towards ARSH issues including HIV/AIDS and substance abuse; and
- (iii) To develop in them essential life skills to cope with and manage ARSH related issues and problems and observe responsible behaviour.

Major Components

In view of the above stated objectives, the adolescence education framework contains three major components: (i) process of growing up during adolescence, (ii) HIV/AIDS, and (III) substance (drug) abuse. The Scheme of Content has been developed based on the following outlines of these components:

- I. Process of Growing up:** This component covers contents on the process of growth and development of children into adulthood such as physical growth and development including development of secondary sexual characteristics, psychological developments underscoring self identity, self concept, self esteem, sex drive and attraction towards the opposite sex; socio-cultural development including relationships of adolescents with parents, peer group and the opposite sex; and gender roles and myths and misconceptions. Critical issues like adolescent pregnancy, nutritional needs of adolescents in general and adolescent girls in particular, major sexually transmitted infections (STIs), reproductive tract infections (RTIs) and adolescent friendly health services (AFHS) are also included in this component.
- II. HIV/AIDS:** This component includes contents on causes and consequences of

HIV/AIDS, preventive measures, anti-retroviral therapy (ART), individual and social responsibilities towards HIV/AIDS patients and the services available for prevention of spread of HIV and also for HIV infected persons.

- III. **Substance (Drug) Abuse:** Under this component are covered the situations in which adolescents and youth are driven to substance (drug) abuse, commonly abused substances (drugs), consequences of substance abuse including its linkages with irresponsible sexual behaviour and HIV/AIDS, preventive measures, treatment, rehabilitation of drug addicts and individual and social responsibilities.

Although these areas appear to be apart from each other, these in fact complement and supplement each other and are critical for empowering adolescents to manage ARSH concerns and protect themselves from the risky situations and avoid those, so that they do not fall prey to HIV infection, shun drug abuse and practice responsible behaviour.

Adolescence Education Programme: Two Strands

Having the above mentioned core Framework which is non-negotiable, Adolescence Education Programme is being implemented in India. It has two major strands: the first, being implemented by state government agencies and also the national agencies and the second exclusively by national agencies.

I. Adolescence Education Programme: supported by NACO

The first strand of the AEP is supported by National AIDS Control Organisation, Ministry of Health and Family welfare, Government of India and being implemented by the Adolescence Education Cells in the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs)/ State Institutes of Education (SIEs)/ Directorates of Education. The national agencies

like National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE), Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) are also engaged in its implementation. The National Council of Educational Research and Training is coordinating and monitoring the implementation of AEP.

Outputs of Adolescence Education Programme

The main outputs of Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) are two-fold:

- (a) Integration of elements of process of growing up, HIV/AIDS and drug abuse including life skills related to ARSH in the content and process of school education, teacher education, adult literacy programmes and alternative innovative educational schemes; and
- (b) organization of life skills focused co-curricular activities in all the secondary and higher secondary schools of the country.

These have been operationalised into the following specific Outputs:

- Curricular adolescence education in classes IX-XII and age appropriate life skills education in classes in I-VIII.
- Integration in in-services teacher training and pre-service in teacher education.
- Mainstreaming with adult education and alternate innovative education schemes of SSC and their schemes to ensure coverage of out of school young people and ;
- Incorporation of measures into education policy to prevent stigma and discrimination against learners/students and educators and ensure access to life skills education for HIV prevention.

Target Group

The mandate of the Adolescence Education Programme is to cover all students studying at

the secondary and senior secondary levels in (i) government, local body and government-aided schools; (ii) educational guarantee schemes (alternative innovative schemes, across the country; (iii) students of open schooling/ open university systems; (iv) all out-of-school children and adolescents being catered to by the adult literacy programmes.

Strategy

To achieve these outputs, the following strategy has been adopted:

1. The curricular integration in the National Curriculum Framework for School Education and Teacher Education and also in the school syllabi and textbooks and pre-service elementary and secondary teacher education courses;
2. Integration in adult literacy materials and other innovative educational programmes like Mahila Samakhya, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA)
3. For organizing life skills based co-curricular activities in classes IX and XI, at least 2 teachers (one male and one female) are being trained in each school, advocacy activities at various levels including parents and community leaders are being organized;
4. Life skills based classroom activities are to be organized at least for 16 hours in an academic session; and
5. Co-curricular activities like Debate, Essay writing, Role play, etc are also to be organized.

Achievements made

- The National Framework and the State Action Plans under AEP were developed by MHRD, NACO and UNICEF in 2005-06.
- To begin with, The Adolescence

Education Cell in MHRD has been monitoring the implementation of Adolescence Education Programme. As a follow up of the decision of the National Core Committee held on 19 December 2005, NCERT was requested to take the responsibility of coordination, monitoring and evaluation of Adolescence Education Programme

- Under the Programme, a Toolkit (MHRD-NACO Toolkit) was developed by the UNICEF-NACO Team. This Tool Kit is under revision.
- Teacher training is at various stages in different States, some of them covering more than 80 per cent schools.
- The organization of classroom activities are also at various stages in different States.

II. Adolescence Education Programme: supported by UNFPA

Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) supported by UNFPA under CP6 is being implemented by 5 national agencies: Council of Boards of School Education (COBSE), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS). The AEP is the extended version of the Project on “Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH) in Schools” launched in October 2004 primarily as an experimental Project. During 2005, a reconsideration occurred and the “Project on ARSH in Schools” was converted into Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) expanding its coverage as well as objectives. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, which is the Executing Agency transferred the AEP along with other Quality Improvement in Schools (QIS) Schemes to National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)

w.e.f. April 2006. The project activities have been focusing on the following two Outputs:

Outputs of UNFPA supported AEP

OUTPUT - 1:

Adolescence Education (AE) elements integrated in syllabi and textbooks of secondary and higher secondary stages of school education and curricula, study materials and interactive voicemail response system (IVRS) the national open schooling system.

OUTPUT - 2:

Life skills based co-curricular activities, teacher counselling and peer education activities organised in secondary and higher secondary schools.

Strategy

- COBSE and NIOS are engaged in the activities related to Output-I. COBSE is attempting at effective integration of adolescence Education elements in the syllabi and textbooks of States through State Boards of School Education. They are employing three strategies – (i) infusion in the existing lessons; (ii) adding a separate Unit/Chapter in the textbooks and integrating in Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation.
- NIOS is integrating these elements in the curricula and study materials for learners as well as in the Interactive Voicemail System (IVRS). They are also using Audio-Visual materials.
- CBSE, KVS and NVS are making efforts to conduct different kinds of activities related to Output – II. They are training Master Trainers and through them at least 2 teachers and 2 peer educators per school, organizing life skills based co-curricular activities for at least 16 hours in an academic session and are also conducting impact studies.

Achievements During the Current Phase (CP-6)

The implementation of the present Adolescence Education Programme actually began in mid-2005. A critical element in AEP has been advocacy to create enabling environment for attaining the programme objectives focused on life skills development. The life skills focused approach has been aimed at equipping adolescents to make informed decisions specially in the context of vulnerable situations related to sex and sexuality, substance (drug) abuse and emotional and mental stress. It is in this context that UNFPA supported AEP has made a departure. Within a period of three years all the implementing agencies have made considerable progress. The following achievements in respect of the two OUTPUTs are noteworthy:

OUTPUT - I:

COBSE

1. Advocacy programmes at the national level have been organized by COBSE for all the State Boards with a view to promoting integration of adolescence education contents in the school syllabi and textbooks.
2. Intensive advocacy at the zonal level have also been organized to make focused interventions for promoting the integration.
3. Syllabi and textbooks of 12 State Boards have been content analysed and mapped for effective integration. AE concepts and plus point for integration have been identified in Science courses specially Biology, languages courses both English as well as regional languages, Home Science, Psychology and Education. Most Boards/Councils have mention 2008-09 as the year during which the mapped concept will be integrated.
4. A Package for Integration of Adolescence

Education has been published by COBSE and widely disseminated. Its Hindi version has also been finalized.

5. Activities have been conducted for integration of adolescence education in the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) system of one of the State Boards and the tried out experience is ready for its operationalisation by other State Boards.

NIOS

1. Advocacy materials have been developed and published by NIOS and those are being used in different activities of the NIOS.
2. NIOS has content analysed study materials of various subjects for secondary and senior secondary stages and integrated study materials have been developed for secondary stage.
3. Software for Interactive Voicemail Response System (IVRS) has been prepared and audio programmes have also been produced.

NCERT

1. Two Committees set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development have conducted comprehensive content analyses of nearly 2000 school textbooks of 19 States, elementary teacher education courses of 16 States and secondary teacher education courses of 37 Universities from 20 States and 322 adult literacy materials from 23 States. The Content Analyses Reports finalized by NCERT are being used for promoting integration of adolescence education elements.
2. NCERT has revised the Package on Adolescence Education that was published in 1999. The drafts of the

following seven booklets of the Package are being finalized for publication: (i) Conceptual Framework, (ii) Knowledge Base, (iii) Cocurricular Activities, (iv) Questions and Answers, (v) Teacher Counselling, (vi) Adolescence Education: Role of Adults (An advocacy material), and (vii) Monitoring and Evaluation.

3. NCERT has also trained Resource Persons drawn from all the Implementing Agencies.
4. Research Design and Tools (Awareness Test, Attitude Scale and Skill Application Test) for conducting content analysis studies and evaluation studies on life skills based co-curricular activities have also been developed by NCERT.

OUTPUT - 2:

CBSE, KVS and NVS

1. CBSE, KVS and NVS have conducted advocacy programmes for educational administrators and Principals at regional levels.
2. The needed advocacy, training and other materials have been developed for use by all the three agencies.
3. Intensive teacher training programmes are continuing to cover all the schools under the respective jurisdictions of CBSE, KVS and NVS.
4. Pre-test tools are being administered on students and teachers of selected number of schools for an evaluation study. The post-test will be administered at the end of the current academic session and the Report will be consolidated by NCERT.

Need for Continuation of AEP During Country Programm-7(CP-7)

The following points merit consideration for

continuation of AEP during the phase of Country Programme-7 (2008-20012):

1. Presently, the Adolescence Education Programme has reached a stage where there is complete preparedness for fully up scaled implementation of activities to realize its objectives. COBSE while working with 11 State Boards, is ready with tried out strategies and modalities for effective integration of ARSH elements in school syllabi and textbooks of all the State Boards. NIOS has completed the process of integration up to secondary stage and is engaged in doing the same at senior secondary stage. It is also at the final stage of incorporation of adolescence education elements in the IVRS. There is a need to reinforce the momentum and strengthen the process of integration.
2. It is very satisfying to note that there is adequately comprehensive integration of elements of adolescence education in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 developed by NCERT and approved by the Central Advisory Board (CABE). It is a curricular policy document that has bounding impact on the entire school education system of the country. The NCF 2005 not only reflects the contents related to ARSH concerns including HIV/AIDS and substance abuse but also lays specific emphasis on the life skills development among students. The process of revision of syllabi and textbooks as a follow up of NCF 2005 is on in different States. This process needs concerted support to ensure effective integration of adolescence education elements.
3. CBSE, KVS and NVS are at a stage where an adequate number of Master Trainers at national and state levels are available, nodal teachers are being trained and by the end of December 2007 CBSE would be organizing life skills based co-curricular activities in a substantial number of

schools, KVS in 600 schools and NVS in 380 schools. Moreover, in order to institutionalize life skills based co-curricular activities, it is necessary to train more than two teachers per school.

4. In accordance with the broad framework of the Adolescence Education Programme being implemented by MHRD in collaboration with NACO, the AEP supported by UNFPA has focused so far only at secondary and higher secondary stages. But pedagogically and also according to the needs of adolescents, it is essential that the upper primary stage is included in its fold. Adolescence Education to be effective has to begin at least from the upper primary stage, i.e. from class VI or VII.
5. There is a special need to intensify the implementation of project activities in selected regions and cover all the target groups simultaneously. It may be more rewarding, if all the States with UNFPA supported IPD programme are brought together under the UNFPA supported Adolescence Education Programme. This may be done in consultation with all the national and international stakeholders.

Adolescence Education Programme in CP - 7:

In view of the above, the Adolescence Education Programme supported by UNFPA needs to be continued during the next phase, i.e. 2008-2012. The following programme framework may be considered in this context:

GOAL

The overarching goal and outputs of the Programme during 2008-2012 will be as follows:

To enable adolescents acquire age appropriate accurate and scientific knowledge about process of growing up during adolescence, HIV/AIDS and drug (substance abuse) and develop in them positive attitude and life skills regarding these issues, so that they may face the challenges of life competently, prevent HIV infection,

safeguard themselves from risky situations and practice responsible behaviour for a healthy life.

OUTPUTS

1. Adolescence Education (AE) elements integrated in school syllabi and textbooks of upper primary, secondary and higher secondary stages and also in the curricula, study materials and interactive voicemail response system (IVRS) of the National Open Schooling System; and
2. Life skills based co-curricular activities, teacher counselling and peer education activities organised in all upper primary, secondary and higher secondary schools.

TARGET GROUPS

AEP during the next phase (CP-7) may target the following in respect of each of the two Outputs:

For Output - 1: Policy decision makers, officials, curriculum framers, material developers and other concerned functionaries of selected State Boards and other concerned institutions of the school education sector and national open schooling

For Output - 2: Students, teachers, parents, educational administrators, opinion leaders, teachers associations and other functionaries of 5000 schools affiliated to CBSE, all schools affiliated to CISCE, 1000 Kendriya Vidyalayas and 500 Navodaya Vidyalayas and also in the schools of concerned States.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The following strategic interventions to be made and activities to be conducted with a view to realizing the concerned OUTPUTS need consideration:

OUTPUT - 1:

1. Advocacy programmes at national and regional levels for State Boards and other concerned institutions, like SCERTs,

Directorates of Education will be organised to sustain the enabling environment for ensuring effective integration of adolescence education elements in school syllabi and textbooks.

2. The basic infrastructure support is required to be ensured in all institutions implementing AEP. COBSE in particular may convince at least the selected State Boards to set up AE cells and place a regular official as in-charge of the respective Cells.
3. The needed materials will be developed based on the mapping conducted by each State Board/SCERT and other institutions and suitable strategies will be adopted to ensure effective integration. Distance learning and self-learning materials, including audio-visual materials and software will also be developed for different target groups. These materials will be multiplied and used in various activities at different levels.
4. Need based training activities, especially for curriculum framers, material developers and question paper setters and those engaged in CCE will be conducted.
5. Evaluation and monitoring activities will be conducted for effective implementation of the Programme. Effective monitoring mechanism and processes will be evolved and employed

OUTPUT - 2:

1. Advocacy programmes at national, and school levels for different target groups, educational administrators, Principals, teachers, media persons, parents, opinion leaders and community leaders will be organized for creating and sustaining congenial environment to facilitate the organization of life skills focused co-curricular activities regularly in all the schools.

2. The needed materials for advocacy, training and co-curricular activities will be developed. These materials will be multiplied and used in various activities at different levels.
 3. Training will continue to have priority. To begin with at least two teachers and two peer educators from every school will be trained intensively to enable them to organize adolescence education activities for adolescent students. For consolidating and sustaining the programme, more number of teachers from every school (at least one teacher for 150 students) will be trained. Selected teachers will also be trained in counseling.
 4. Life skills based co-curricular activities will be organized for students regularly to ensure that all the adolescent students are associated with experiential learning situations quite frequently. This may also ensure that these activities are institutionalized in the school education system.
 6. Evaluation and monitoring activities will be conducted for effective implementation of the Programme. MIS specifically suited to the Indian education system may be developed and employed rigorously for monitoring the programme implementation. The key offices of educational administration at state, regional and district levels have to be on board for effective monitoring of the programme.
- time regular official as in-charge of the implementation of AEP in every partner agency.
- The monitoring mechanism and processes have to be geared towards qualitative dimensions of programme implementation.
 - The quality of integration of AE elements in the content and process of school education, teacher education (both pre-service & in-service) and materials and teaching learning processes of open schooling system need to be evaluated and monitored.
 - There is a need to enlarge the strength of the master trainers in view of the large number of teachers to be trained based on the student teacher ratio of one teacher for every 150 students. It would be still better if all the teachers are provided orientation in adolescence education.
 - Over and above teacher training in counseling, there is a need to make suitable arrangement for availing the services of Counsellors posted in CBSE affiliated schools by Kendriya Vidyalayas/Navodaya Vidyalays within the earmarked geographical areas. Efforts are also needed to establish linkages with Psychology Departments of Universities/Colleges in the neighbourhood schools.
 - Concerted efforts may be made to maximize the use of media, a. v. materials and ICT (e-learning). Quality a. v. programmes may be produced and used frequently not only for advocacy and training but also for classroom transactions.
 - There is a need to develop the MIS for effective monitoring and maintaining a comprehensive database in respect of schools, teachers and students to be updated regularly.
 - Since the tasks related to training of master

Quality Concerns and Programme Monitoring

In the background of the present status of AEP, it is very important to lay special emphasis on programme monitoring particularly focused on key quality concerns. The following points merit consideration in this regard:

- For effective implementation of AEP, it would be essential to place at least one full

trainers and teachers and monitoring would be challenging, the engagement of some professional agencies like IL&FS may be considered.

- Active involvement of adolescent students needs to be encouraged. They may be encouraged to bring out their own newsletters like the one known as

“YOUTHORIA” being published students of schools belonging to the Progressive Schools Organisation in Delhi.

- For sharing of experiences among different school systems within and outside the country, Exchange Programmes may be organized at regular intervals.

INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM :IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

The following agencies will be involved in the implementation of Adolescence Education Programme supported by MHRD and UNFPA:

- (i) Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) - Executing/ Programme Component Manager (PCM)
- (ii) National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) - Implementing/Coordinating Agency
- (iii) STATES/ UTs , NCERT, COBSE & NIOS, CBSE, CISCE, KVS, NVS , - Partner Agencies

Adolescence Education and Rights based opportunities for full flowering of life - the Prayas perspective and Experience

Synopsis of the paper

Prayas believes that adolescence comes into the continuum of age which requires special focus and specialized treatment to facilitate full flowering of personality and for that it is very essential to define the term child and continuum which cover entire childhood and adolescence. If we go through Article 1 which defines the holder of rights under the CRC as 'every human being below the age of majority, the Convention defines a "child" as every human being below the age of 18 years. Accordingly, Indian legislation has been enacted to make 18 years the general age of majority in India, 21 years continues to be the upper limit for childhood for various reasons. The South Asian Task Force on Bonded Child Labour defines a bonded child labourer as a child (below 18 years of age as defined in the UNCRC) working against debt taken by himself/herself or his/her family members, or working against any social obligation. Similarly JJ Act defines the term 'juvenile' and 'child' to mean a person who has not completed the 18th year of age.

The above stated definition treats all individual as children falling in the age group upto 18 years. However, the age group upto 19 years also requires very specific socio systemic intervention. The age continuum upto 19 years is very delicate phase of life and with many civil rights conferred to then just after the completion of 18 years opens an entirely new chapter in their life and make an immediate jump to adulthood: right to vote and participation in democratic processes, licensing to many life opportunities such as licensing to drive etc. Prayas believes that with a view to facilitate growth and development phase of the period we have to have very specific intervention for the continuum of 12 to 14 years and 14 to 18 years and a bridging program from 18 upto 19 years

age group. If we speak about the children/ adolescents falling into the category of difficult circumstances then we need to have very empathetic intervention to cover 15 to 19 crore adolescent living in harsh conditions and evolve a very carefully designed program for them. Therefore in Prayas JAC documents one may often finds every individual below 19 to be addressed as children. Prayas JAC Society is working with a variety of children in the difficult circumstances.

Prayas Integrated program for all-round development and economic self reliance

At Prayas it is believed that adolescents symbolize developing energy, action and creativity, not only the future but more importantly the present of the nation. Demographically they account for one-fifth of the world's population and in India, the age-group of 12 to 19 constitute 22.8% of the population¹. This means that approximately 230 million Indians belong to this age group, and as per the projections their relative percentage in the total population is increasing. Now such a big population can not go unnoticed and be left to survive on their own, so far as their all round development is concerned, it is a national issue which need to be addressed in more strategic fashion and through inter-sectoral approach.

If we pick up the socio systemic issues proximating them, official estimate² finds nearly 79% of the Indians to be 'poor and vulnerable', in the same ratio, a large proportion of adolescents get surrounded by difficult circumstances – on account of sheer economic reasons or poverty, or certain socio – psychological, legal, geographical and cultural factors, and they are left to fend for themselves.

Now, in the changing scenario, when global community is striving to establish a regime of rights-based equitable society and social justice for all, we have to provide this large population with wherewithal to deal with life situations. And, it is also being uniformly accepted that apart from secondary level education being imparted through formal education system, we have enormous need to introduce a very special, focused program for Adolescent Education that has to play the pivotal role, as the basic tool and the process to develop and empower the youth into dignified citizens to enhance their ability to lead a dignified life.

If we analyze the situation of universal basic education critically, it is very much evident that the present-day formal education system in India is failing to meet out the galvanizing needs of bringing children and youth into safety net and occupational stream of education. Nearly 1.4 crore of them still out of school, the situation is especially being worse in Bihar, Rajasthan and Jharkhand. The situation is very alarming as these primary education system is the feeder system for the higher adolescent education and generally it is thresholds for adolescent preparedness for another phase, more advance and more challenging and demanding phase of life.

Therefore, there is a call for large and systematic program of integrated Alternative Education to meet out the differentiated needs of the children and youths, which is the model being practiced at Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre Society. Prayas believes that the population of marginalized adolescents and “children in need” which counts nearly 35 million at present, is facing exclusion in all developmental programs. In Delhi, the capital city of the country, nearly 0.5 million street & working children and marginalized adolescents are waiting for a better future for themselves. In our normal formal society, where programs target various development issues, marginalized and excluded children and youths groups remain outside the

mainstream – special programs, specialized institutions, and specialist educators. Notwithstanding the best intentions, too often the result has been exclusion: ‘second-rate’ educational opportunities that do not guarantee the possibility to continue studies, or differentiation becoming a form of discrimination, leaving children and youths with various needs outside the mainstream of school life and later, as adults, outside community social and cultural life in general.

Prayas believes that the situation mentioned above can be altered through a fundamental change in the approach and functioning of the education system on one hand, and by providing viable alternative modes of education and skill - coupled with concrete socio-political empowerment of the poor and deprived, on the other. Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre, a humanitarian, gender sensitive, development organization was envisioned to restore the rights of the disadvantaged and deprived children and youth in multiple situations, and ensure equity- and right- based socio systemic environment which facilitate a dignified life to them. Beginning with the 25 destitute children of Delhi, over the years, Prayas covered hundreds of thousands of children, youth and adolescents in different parts of the country taking into its fold the most deprived groups of them.

The organisation is today running 10 institutional besides multiple non-institutional projects through community-based Alternative Education Centres and Community libraries, vocational Education Centres for 50,000 children at-risk in 08 States of India: Delhi, Bihar, Gujarat, Assam, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Rajasthan, Haryana and Arunachal Pradesh. In addition to its Child Welfare and developmental activities, Prayas supports 8000 plus youth and women through 50 market driven skills training centres under Prayas Institute of Economic Empowerment -PIEE and Jan Shikshan Sansthan -JSS, Prayas. 6000

women are being supported through Self Help Group, Micro -Finance and IGP activities and nearly 10,000 children, women, aged and disabled, mostly victims of earthquake, Tsunami and floods in Gujarat, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Bihar are being catered through several right based integrated education and empowerment program. It has its chapters in UK, Germany and USA supporting educational programs for underprivileged.

Beneficiaries of Prayas programs are mostly neglected children living in hazardous situations and the children and adolescents who have been subjected to - physical, emotional, economic, sexual, substance abuse, under myriad forms of neglect³. Apart from this, Prayas is also working with juveniles in conflict with law, drug and substance abuse addicts, children of prisoners, adolescents/children affected by armed conflict, Children interfacing legal systems, children living in institutions, missing and found Children and Children affected by natural disaster i.e. children affected due to Tsunami and earthquake. Issues related to their all round development and dignified life opportunities are well addressed through integrated schemes/ programs related to health, education and vocationalisation.

Apart from these rights based development programs, Prayas in collaboration with NIOS and JSS a polyvalent Adult and Vocational Education program being implemented by Prayas in Delhi is organizing equivalency programs for class 3, 5 and 8 for the Neo Literates and Adolescents in difficult situation due to their socio -legal positioning. Thus Prayas is an active partner of National Literacy Mission and NIOS and working to achieve the objectives of Continuing Education which include continuing and lifelong learning and also equivalency. Equivalency with formal school education is given with respect to A,B and C levels equivalent to Class 3,5 and 8 and also with respect to Vocational courses undertaken by the neo literates and other trainees of JSS which

include former child labour , juveniles , rag pickers , children residing in Bal Sudhar Homes. JSS Prayas got the accreditation from NIOS for OBE program in March 2006. The organisation is also implementing INDUS CHILD Labour Project for imparting training to former child labour in the age group of 13 to 17 and also an Income Generating Program for the mothers of Child Labour. This target group has very low literacy level. Some of them are illiterate and do not have even functional literacy. Here the OBE program comes to their rescue. Besides providing vocational skills Prayas is enrolling them for OBE program of NIOS.

Interventions and Services provided for protection, education and empowerment of children and youths

i) Education through -

- Non-formal/ Alternative Education Centres -NFECs or AECs as the bridge facility to formal schooling thereby contributing to attain UEE target for out of schoolers through EGS/ AIE, Bridge Course, Remedial Courses (225 AECs across the country). These courses pave the way for preparing to get into mainstreaming into formal schools or NIOS).
- Crèche facilities for very young children (Pre-schooling) as part of Early Childhood Care and Education Program -ECCE popularly known as Pehla Kadam.
- Adoption of BRAC model of Bangladesh of active pedagogic interventions for highly structured NFE programs. Curricular processes for out of schoolers are designed in active consultation with NCERT, NIEPA and other academic institutions. Continuous adaptation and enrichment is done through inclusion of multi media and creative expression for making education, more interactive and joyful learning experience.
- Emphasis on joyful and peer learning - Bal

Sabhas are regular feature of Saturdays. Efforts to make AECs attractive places through integration of creative expression – Arts and Crafts, innovations in infrastructure (Catharsis and some defreezing activities are integrated to deal some sort of abuse and catastrophic situations through rigorous counseling).

- Capacity enhancement of Educators through rigorous trainings/workshops/orientation course/refresher course and monthly review and planning meetings of Educators to deal with the issues related to pedagogy, child psychology, classroom management and community participation.
- Distance education program through Jan Shikshan Sansthan- JSS /Prayas Institute of Economic Empowerment through networking with NIOS for adults and young adolescents who can not go to mainstream schooling.
- Community Libraries across the country for encouraging reading habits leading to enhanced academic achievement (22 community libraries across the country).

ii) Child protection and restoration of justice through -

- Child rights protection projects -IJJ
- Shelter Homes for both boys and girls
- Counseling & Psycho-Social Interventions Rehabilitation & Restoration
- Child line...1098 & Guidance Program
- Crisis Interventions Centres
- Child Trafficking Prevention & Rehabilitation of Victims
- Child Labour /Railway Children Protection Programs

iii) Health services through

- Intensive health care and check ups through mobile centres and camps and integrated Health Programs (Immunization, General illness, SRH etc.)
- Prayas Health Service -PHS Centres operational at different intervention areas (approx. 10,000 children in Delhi during 2006)
- Family Health Counseling system for urban and rural slum areas (1931 cases handled in Delhi)

iv) Care and psycho -social support mechanism

- Counseling & Psycho-Social Interventions
- Efforts to obtain sponsorship for the those who are in need of financial support
- Integrated project for placing volunteers across the globe to carry out educational program in various slums
- Supply related to Mid Day Meal and maintenance (Stationery, Clothes, shoes etc.)

v) Economic empowerment through

- Skills development and Vocational training under Jan Shikshan Sansthan -JSS set up in collaboration with the MHRD
- 3000(8000-in Country) children and adolescents/youth in Delhi alone receiving training in 20 vocational skills
- Placement units link them to industries as well as Micro- entrepreneurship and Income Generating Program (IGPs).
- ‘Sanchay Prayas’ chain of shops and Service –Centers and Socially Relevant Enterprises to help the youth into economically productive activities.
- Development of self-help groups of women of the project area for micro credit and deal with many socio -economic issues and

gender empowerment

vii) Reinforcing informed public opinion

- Development of integrated socio-systemic environment through facilitating creation of civil society fora
- Developing public- private partnership and community based schooling system
- Associating with Community, Civil society, concerned citizens/organizations and government institutions

viii) Rigorous policy advocacy

- Networking and policy advocacy in favour of care protection and education through continuous research and documentation – National Study on Child Abuse – India 2007, (Proposed) National Survey for Handloom Weavers
- Information, Communication and Visibility at various platform, networking and policy lobbying to influence policies and practices to ensure equity and social justice
- Interacting and interfacing with agencies/ individuals across the globe

In Prayas, we have many success stories where the children from difficult circumstances have continued education through alternate mode and completed 10 and 12 from NIOS and

earning 5000 to 6000 as on date. I can recall the success story of deepne a juvenile who was a rape accused and was sent to Prayas Home J. Puri on good conduct. He was provided vocational training by Prayas and as on date is working as Chef in Taj group of Hotels . Another story is of Ashok who ran away from his Home at a very young age. At that time he has not completed even middle level of Education. He has stayed in Prayas Home for more than 5 years. Today he is 10th pass and has skills in Computer Applications and Retail Trade. He has worked with Reliance Fresh at a salary of Rs.5000/ and already has a offer from Aditya Birla Group to join at the salary of around Rs.8000/ After having tasted the fruits of literacy these boys are self motivated to continue education life long and achieve new milestones in life through distance mode.

¹ According to the Planning Commission's Population projections

² Mr. Arjun Sengupta, Chairman, Committee on Unorganized Sector

³ Report of National Study on Child Abuse 2007 conducted by the Prayas JAC Society on 18220 respondents covering 13 States in the country, the largest ever country study (UN) in collaboration with the Ministry of women & Child Development, Unicef and Save the Children

AEP INITIATIVES IN NIOS

Status paper

Adolescents constitute nearly one fifth of Indian population. As per 2001 census of India there are 220 million adolescents in the country. Of these, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) meets the educational needs of about 1.5 million through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode of education. Adolescents of today will be the workforce of tomorrow. Their education can be a foundation for augmenting the nation's economy. Elevating the educational status of adolescents becomes the principal concern of the country. The growing adolescents need to be equipped with not only relevant knowledge and vocational skills but also the skills to manage their emerging concerns effectively.

Open and Distance Learning has been considered as a viable and effective alternative to impart education to adolescents who may not have access to the formal education system. NIOS, being a premier organization providing education through ODL system strives to meet the educational needs of adolescent to raise their competencies and skills. Besides the academic courses, NIOS provides a wide array of Vocational Education courses.

Taking note of the vulnerable nature of adolescents, NIOS in collaboration with United Nation Population Fund (UNFPA) has implemented the Adolescence Education Programme (AEP). The basic objectives of the Adolescence Education Programme of NIOS are:

- to create an awareness about sexual health concerns amongst adolescents
- to forewarn them about the problems that they may face in everyday life,
- to strengthen their life skills for better and healthy life, and
- to develop in them an affirmative attitude regarding these concerns..

1. Key issues for Adolescence Education

The key issues that NIOS has focused under Adolescence Education Programme are:

- to provide authentic and accurate information about physical, psychological and socio-cultural issues related to adolescent reproductive health;
- to create awareness amongst adolescents about the causes and consequences of substance abuse and ways of preventing it;
- to enhance life skills of adolescents enabling them to make informed and responsible choices;
- to increase sensitivity towards the needs of people living with HIV/ AIDS.

2. Strategies formulated by NIOS for Adolescence Education

It was an immediate noteworthy step to determine an effective approach to reach the target group. Keeping in view the delivery mechanisms, NIOS decided to utilize the curricular approach to disseminate Adolescence Education (AE) related information. Therefore, three alternative strategies were formulated:

(a) Introducing a separate subject to carry all the required information.

OR

(b) Placing the required information in the career subjects; for example in Home Science, Social Studies, Science, etc., and enrich their contents accordingly,

OR

(c) Integrating important information across the subjects so that the learners get the required information from whichever subject they opt for.

NIOS tried to provide adequate knowledge to their students by integrating adolescence education and life skills in various subjects. NIOS chose to employ the last alternative i.e., integrating information across various subjects. The last alternative was finalized keeping in view its viability and suitability. Introducing a separate subject didn't appear to be a satisfactory approach. Today more and more learners opt for technical education to compete with the ever increasing demand of employment. As a result, introduction of a separate subject in the curriculum emphasizing life skills may be neglected. Similarly an enriched carrier subject would reach only those in the target group who opt for it and not others. Hence keeping this in view, integrating information across various subjects was finalized and implemented.

3. Initiatives taken by NIOS for Adolescence Education

In order to proceed with the curricular approach, to reach the target learners of NIOS, Self Instructional Materials (SIMs) needed integration. The SIMs were therefore enriched with content, exercises, questions and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) related to Adolescence Education using the life skills approach. Emphasis was made on integrating higher order questions comprising of applications as far as possible so as to provide better insight and comprehension among learners. Yet another requirement identified was to sensitize the personnel involved with the development of SIMs with the life skills approach. These included the Academic Officers in NIOS, the lesson writers, editors etc. To sensitize the concerned personnel with all these components there was a need to hold the orientation programmes and Capacity Building Workshops (CBW).

3.1 The Capacity Building Workshops

Capacity Building Workshops were organized with the focus of imparting knowledge, skills and attitude based information to the NIOS faculty, lesson writers as well as editors.

The Objectives of CBW were to:

- sensitize lesson writers to issues and concerns related to adolescents;
- develop an understanding in the lesson writers that AE related issues need to be included in the curriculum;
- initiate internalization of Life Skills in lesson writers;
- integrate these issues and concerns in SIM, keeping the Life Skills approach in mind;
- develop exercises and activities for evaluation of Life Skills.

The primary step towards achieving the goal was to sensitize the Academic Officers of NIOS so that they could carry out further training of lesson writers. A Tutor Training Manual was also developed for the Coordinators, Facilitators and the Tutors who managed the Contact Programmes of the learners enrolled with NIOS. Taking these views into consideration, three areas viz. Knowledge based, Skill based, and Attitude based were focused during the capacity building workshops.

Owing to the limited time frame of the Training Programme, five workshops were proposed to be conducted in five cities during the year 2007. A set of 5 experts and NIOS representative of AEP conducted the 4-day long Training workshops for 25 Lesson Writers. The content of workshop included issues relating to HIV, RTI, STIs, substance abuse, knowledge of life skills, application of life skills in AEP, preparation of SIM and integration of above mentioned issues in the lesson. These included brainstorming sessions, group discussions, presentations, guided group work, chart and collage making, role play, quiz, games, Visualization In Participatory Process (VIPPP) etc.

3.2 Integration of AE information in Learning Materials at Senior Secondary level

The course materials at secondary level were integrated and updated with respect to AE issues focusing the life skills approach. Many

different options were formulated to impart integration, however the final decision was made wherein integrating information across various subjects was selected and presumed to be the most effective means. The AE related issues were integrated among a wide array of subjects.

The issues related to adolescence education and life skills have been integrated in 12 subjects like Hindi, Urdu, English, Arabic, Tamil, Political Science, Biology, Home science, General Science, Geography, Psychology, and Accountancy.

3.3 Support Materials For Adolescence Education Programme

In the purview of distance education, support material means any material that helps the learner to clarify and comprehend, further enrich, or learn new/ related aspects of what s/ he is supposed to learn from the learning material provided already. Subsequently it is also seen that each individual has a varied style of learning. Therefore keeping this diversity in mind and considering that the learner may have very little regular contact with NIOS, it was decided to use a variety of support materials in order to assist in the already existing SIMs. Types of support materials prepared for AEP include the following.

a) Print Support Material

- i). **Advocacy Folder**- NIOS has produced a one page folder in four vibrant colors with eye-catching graphics giving important details of the Adolescence Education Programme being implemented by the organization. It was printed in both Hindi and English. The folder was circulated widely which helped in disseminating information about AEP to the stake holders. Nearly 35,000 copies of the advocacy folder have been printed and disseminated.
- ii) **Book-mark**- Specially designed bookmark having messages about HIV/AIDS in Hindi and in English was distributed to every learner. 100,000 book marks have been inserted in SLMs

- iii) **Almanac 2007** - The Almanac was printed for the officials and administrators for assistance in planning the activities and creating an enabling environment. 5,000 copies of Almanac were printed and disseminated.
- iv) **Planner 2007**- Like bookmark, a planner was also designed with a sole motive to strengthen the issues related to AE. It was printed in both Hindi and English. The planner not only acted as reminder but had additional role to perform. It helped the learners to develop skills of setting goals and fixing targets and keeping a record of their important activities. 60,000 copies in English and 95,000 copies in Hindi printed for NIOS learners.
- v) **Information on AEP in the Prospectus 2006-07** - Life skills based graphics and a segment about the programme were included in the NIOS Prospectus. Nearly 350,000 copies of the prospectus. The prospectus could be downloaded from the NIOS website also.
- vi) **Open Learning Magazine** - It is an in house, a biannual interactive magazine that serves as a printed tutorial for open school learners. However the magazine also caters to individuals/ institutions interested in distance education. Articles on relevant topics like HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and other topics were written and published in this magazine.
- vii) **Posters** - A symbolic pictorial presentation with an eye- catchy slogan always helps in quick registration of the message in the minds of readers. The learner can relate to the pictorials and identify with the characters in the picture. A set of 12 posters was developed and exhibited for feedback at Dilli Haat. It served a dual purpose of field testing as well as generating awareness among all about the adolescents' issues and concerns. For this, a group of learners were imparted a one

day training about the content of the posters and were placed at the site of display. Their job was to explain the posters to public and note their feedback/reactions. In order to capture viewers' consideration, "Nukkad Nataks" on themes like girl child, human rights, substance abuse and film about NIOS were organized for 3 days in close proximity to the site of the poster display. With a footfall of nearly 4700 people and feedback provided by 1300 people, this exercise generated a lot of interest in various stakeholders.

viii) Graphic Bank and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – A number of graphics and questions on information related to adolescent issues and concerns have been developed for insertion.

ix) Separator Sheets - Information and Separator Sheet for Open Learning Magazine as well as Separator Sheets for Prospectus 2007-08 were also developed. 4,00,000 copies of Prospectus have been printed.

b) Electronic Support Material

i) Audio Programme : Audio tape and CDs are the most cost effective form of support material provided in distance learning programmes. When produced on mass scale, these are very inexpensive and add variety to learning. By complementing the reading from print, these audio programs make use of the time available with learner very effectively. Under AEP, NIOS produced audio tapes and CD on HIV/AIDS *Swasthya Chintan*, *Samajh Ka Dosh*, *Fikre-e-Sehat*, *Rang Hamari Muthi Mein* etc.

ii) NIOS appreciated the importance of producing such audio programmes therefore sought professional help from the experts. The topics dealt within audio programmes included HIV, Substance Abuse and Rights of Adolescents. The scripts were written in such a way

that sensitive topics like HIV seemed relevant to the situation being discussed and further the handling of the topic was done in a very comprehensive manner keeping in mind the needs of the learners. The treatment was in the dialogue format and the language used was very simple. The inclusion of music and songs made the audio more interesting and added an element of enjoyment. The programmes are aired in *Gyan Vani* Programme on National FM channel. these are also made available to each study center for use during Personal Contact Programme (PCP) sessions with learners

iii) Video Programme: "*Yeh Dosti*" and "*Pate ki Baat*" - NIOS has been instrumental in producing a film on substance abuse and a film on internalization of life skills specially empathy. Following the identification of the experts from various areas including media experts, academic experts and peer trainers, the content was identified and academic briefs were developed followed by identifying the producers. The films are broadcast in *Gyan Darshan* Programme on National Television.

iv) Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) - The plan to develop IVRS was initiated in the year 2003. The system has the capability to respond to the frequently asked questions and to provide the information required. IVRS answers a number of questions an adolescent may ask, by way of an automated system and pre-recorded voice messages. It is a telephonic helpline service accessible both in Hindi and English. It includes relevant and age-appropriate information related to one's body, substance abuse, relationships, sexual disease and HIV. IVRS is among one of the support materials. The content for IVRS has been finalized and recorded. The information on any AE related issues can be accessed

by NIOS learners through a toll-free number 1800 180 9393. A pilot study has been conducted to identify the user acceptability. The User Acceptance Test (UAT) has been conducted with teachers and NIOS learners.

v) **NIOS/ AEP Website** - Website being the fastest medium for transferring information as well as having a universal reach crossing all geographical and time boundaries does not have the limitations of a print material or a monotonous classroom atmosphere. It is believed that by using active colorful graphics, background music, interesting games etc., the website tends to sustain the interest of the learner over a longer period of time. Since the aim of distance learning is to provide relevant information to the target group in an easily understandable format, which is not only informative but is also attractive enough to sustain attention of the recipients, use of website is a good alternative. It is not only accessible but is also popular amongst adolescents. NIOS already owns a web-site www.nos.org or www.nios.ac.in. The popularity of the site can be measured by the fact that nearly 3,000,000 hits have been recorded since February 2007. As many as 100,000 hits per day are recorded when the results are posted on the site.

However, after a long thought process, it was accepted that a website solely related to AE issues would prove to be an effective backbone providing supportive information on adolescence related issues and concerns. It was decided to conceive a specific web-page for AE keeping in view the fact that many adolescents and even parents do not feel comfortable in discussing certain issues. The web-site would afford them an opportunity to get authentic, scientific and accurate information in private. It is envisaged that net surfers of every age group can have adolescent related information, whenever and wherever they want. This

information would come handy even for other groups like parents, researchers, social workers, counselors, etc. AEP WebPages can be accessed at www.aep/nos.org.

The presentation of the content has been done in an interactive, innovative and attractive way to sustain interest of the user. The AEP website is not only equipped with content related to adolescence issues, but also with innovative strategies such as games and quizzes busting the age old myths and misconceptions.

4. CHALLENGES

1. Sensitize the stakeholders
2. Build capacities of lesson writers
3. Deal with life skills enhancement through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System
4. Update the materials from time to time
5. Expand the outreach through provision of the service in other regional languages
6. Motivate the learners to make maximum use of information provided

5. Road Ahead

With an objective to remove misconceptions and raise the level of awareness leading to an attitudinal change towards adolescence issues, it is proposed to:

- i) Integrate AE messages using the Life Skills approach in all the subjects at the level of senior secondary, secondary and Open Basic Education (OBE);
- ii) Field test the integrated material in order to measure the efficacy of integrations carried out;
- iii) Conduct Capacity Building Workshops to sensitize the stakeholders;
- iv) Enlarge the scope of print support material and electronic support material to provide authentic information to the stakeholders and adolescents.