

APARAJITA

The Indomitable Spirit of
Young Girls and Women

MARRIAGE: NO CHILD'S PLAY PROGRAMME INDIA

Adaptive programming in times
of COVID-19

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**Voluntary Health
Association of India**



Positive Development in Health Sector in India



Swachh Bharat Abhiyan
(Clean India Movement)



Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
(Save Girl Child,
Educate Girl Child)



Resolve to eliminate
Tuberculosis,
Malaria & HIV/AIDS



Steps to curb the use of
tobacco products

But Still.....

India accounted for **19%** (56,000 in numbers) of all global maternal deaths & nearly **20%** of the world's child deaths.

Poor Indicators of Reproductive Maternal Child & Adolescent Health

Symbolic of

Health and gender
inequities faced women
& adolescents

Reflects on

Pre-birth and post-birth
discrimination
manifested against girls

CHILD MARRIAGE

Violation of Human Rights

*I need to rest in my
mother's arms
Don't compel me
to be the one*

India has the largest number of child brides in the world

Census 2001(India)

380,000 child brides

Census 2011

5 million child brides

An increase of 4.56 million in 10 years



Despite the ban since 85 years, 47.4% of women (20-24 years) are married before the age of 18 years

A TALE OF TWO PANDEMICS

COVID-19

- Recent in origin
- As of 1 June 2020, more than 6.15 million cases across the world
- More than 371,000 deaths
- Elderly and Co-morbid most affected

SHADOW PANDEMIC

- Brewing for decades now
- Gender-based violence, Weak child protection and SRHR
- GBV affects 1 in 3 women in their lifetime
- Exacerbated with COVID-19 and the lockdowns
- Women and children are the most fragile population groups

SPREAD ACROSS THE WORLD...

Gender-Specific Risks Associated With Impacts Of Covid-19

STRUCTURAL LEVEL

- Deprioritization of sexual and reproductive healthcare
- Disruption of health supply chain
- Crackdown on human rights



SOCIAL LEVEL

- Limited educational services
- Unequal socioeconomic status
- Differential economic impacts
- Increased fear of health services
- Reverse mass migration

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

- Increased GBV
- Unequal access to water
- Unequal caregiving role
- Limited decision-making power
- Increased risk of maternal mortality and morbidity
- Mental health



Marriage - No Child's Play
A Comprehensive Programme to Avert Child Marriage in India with support from MT'BA

VISION

MTBA has a vision of a society where adolescents girls and women

Equal right to decide freely if & when to marry

Live with dignity, have choices and equal opportunities

Making informed choices about their health and well beings especially sexual reproductive health & rights in a supportive environment



MTBA INTERVENTIONS

Seven Areas Of Intervention

**SRHR service
access
and utilization**

Education

**Economic
empowerment**

**Increased child
protection
systems**

**Enhanced
collective social
action**

**Supportive
rights based
legal
environment**

**SRHR service
delivery**



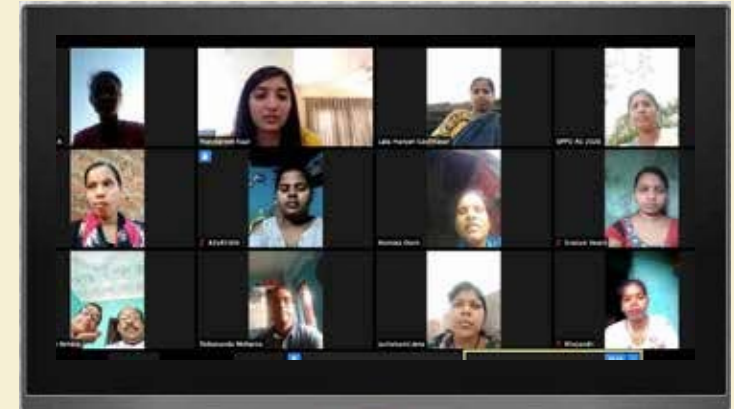
COMMUNITY LED
INITIATIVE TO END CHILD
MARRIAGE



Empowering Young Girls with Knowledge On SRHR And Life Skill Education

- Adolescent Girls & Boys groups at the village level
- Training of Discussion Leaders on SRHR, Life Skill Education etc.
- Group Discussions at Information Dissemination Centers (Knowledge Hub) at the village level by adolescent groups

Video Group Discussion led by Discussion leaders

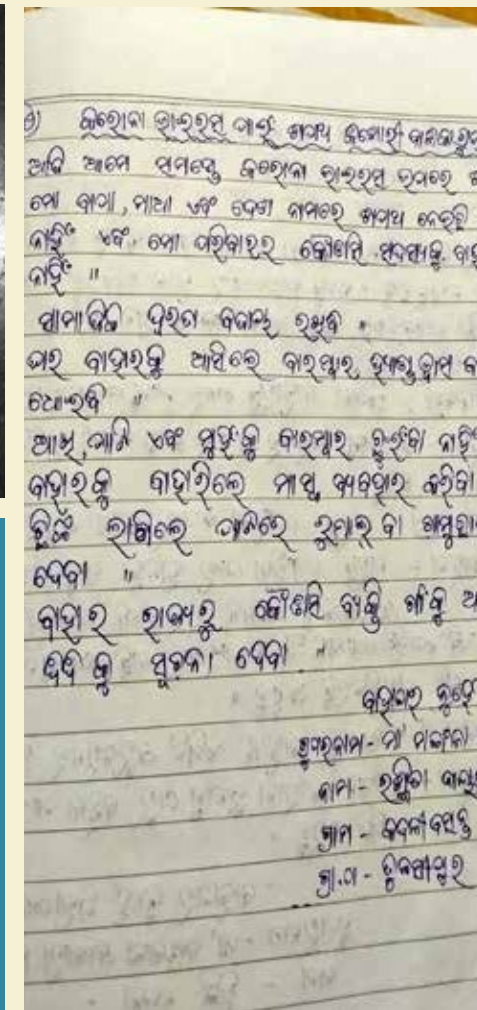


Whatsapp Chat Groups

THEN
&
NOW

- More than 300 adolescent girls through 5 WhatsApp groups (each group comprises of 50 girls)
- Theme based Weekly Contest/Discussion
- Provide relevant COVID-19 related information with the girls & to address their queries related to SRHR and other issues





WHATSAPP GROUP ACTIVITIES



WEEKLY THEMES

- EXPERIENCE SHARING
- CHILD PROTECTION
- COVID-19 PREVENTION
- MENSTRUAL HYGIENE
- SAY NO TO TOBACCO



"ବନ୍ଧେ ଉତ୍କଳ ଜନନୀ"

- ବାବୁବେ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମୀବାସ ମହାପାତ୍ର (୧୯୧୨)

ବନ୍ଧେ ଉତ୍କଳ ଜନନୀ,
ଚାନ୍ଦ-ହାସମୟୀ ଚାନ୍ଦ-ଭାଷମୟୀ,
ଜନନୀ, ଜନନୀ, ଜନନୀ॥

ପୁତ୍ର-ପ୍ରୟୋଧ-ବିଧୌତ ଶରୀରା,
ଚାନ୍ଦ-ଚମାଳ ସୁଶୋଭିତ ଚାନ୍ଦ,
ଶୁଭ୍ର-ଚର୍ଚ୍ଚିତା-ବୁଦ୍ଧ ଶାବର-ସମାରା,
ଜନନୀ, ଜନନୀ, ଜନନୀ॥

ଘଟ-ଘଟ-ବନ୍ଧୁମି ରାଜିତ ଅଙ୍ଗେ,
ନୀଳ-ଭୂଷଣ-ମାଳା ସାଜି ଚରଙ୍ଗେ,
କଳକଳ-ମୁଖରତ ଚାନ୍ଦ-ବିହଙ୍ଗେ,
ଜନନୀ, ଜନନୀ, ଜନନୀ॥

ସୁନ୍ଦରଶାଳୀ ସୁଶୋଭିତ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରା,
ଆନ-ବିଭାବ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶିତ ଚେତ୍ରା,
ଯୋଗୀ ରଞ୍ଜିତ ଉତ୍କଳ ପବିତ୍ରା,

Access to Economic Opportunities for Girls at Risk and Affected by Child Marriage



- VOCATIONAL TRAINING OF UNMARRIED AND MARRIED GIRLS
- LINKED TO SKILL INDIA AND OTHER SKILL BUILDING INSTITUTIONS
- CAREER COUNSELLING TO THE ADOLESCENTS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS

**THEN
&
NOW**



“SUPPORTING MASK MAKING” INITIATIVE BY ADOLESCENT GIRLS & SELF-HELP GROUPS

- APPROX. 140 GIRLS AND SELF-HELP GROUP MEMBERS HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO STITCH MASKS
- FIELD STAFF IS SUPPLYING RAW MATERIALS TO THESE GROUPS
- SUPPORTING IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF MASKS DIRECTLY TO ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND THROUGH GRAM PANCHAYATS TO THE NEEDY

Access to Child Protection Systems for Girls at Risk and Affected by Child Marriage



- Formation of Village Child Protection Committee
- Inclusion of child marriage issues in the village and district development plans
- Strengthening the already existing government's Child Protection Committee at the various levels
- 24x7 Child/ Adolescent Helpline Number for reporting the case of child marriage

THEN
&
NOW

Creation of Local Emergency Helpline Number

- Government helpline number has become non functional due to entire focus on COVID-19
- Created dedicated local helpline for group members & local communities in collaboration with Government Authorities (Available between 7 am to 9 pm six days a week except Sunday)
- Till now, we have received more than 900 calls on issues such as COVID-19 prevention, menstrual irregularities, non-availability of sanitary napkins & non-availability of essential drugs such as for diabetes or hypertension etc.



Access and Utilisation of SRHR Services

- Sensitization of government frontline health functionaries on sexual & reproductive issues and child marriage & its adverse effects
- Strengthening Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHCs) set up by Government
- Organising regular dialogues between the Government Health functionaries and adolescents
- Liaisoning with the Central, State and Local Government to ensure effective implementation of adolescent programmes and policies



SRH Service Disruption: Sanitary Napkins Crisis



Distribution of Sanitary Napkins to the girls

Challenge

- Shift in focus of health care services from SRH to COVID-19 management
- Disrupted the supply of sanitary napkins especially for girls dependent on Government facilities
- Girls once again forced to use unhygienic material during menstruation

Mapping of SRH Services in our intervention areas:

Sanitary Napkins are out of stock with Government frontline workers since March 2020

- Procured & distributed sanitary napkins to 4000 vulnerable adolescent girls living in the remote & distant villages.
- The distribution is done by our Discussion Leaders & Government Frontline Workers
- Liaisoning with district & state level health administration In order to ensure the supply chain is restored at the earliest.

Increased Access to Formal Education



Regular functioning of
School Management
Committees and Parent
Teacher Associations in
the schools

Counseling of Parents of
the girls who have
dropped out of the
schools for
re-enrolment

Sensitization of Teachers
& community groups/
leaders on SRHR and
child marriage issues

Liaisoning with
Education Departments
at all the levels

Collective Social Action against Child Marriage



Community Based Planning & Monitoring

Involvement of

- Community Leaders
- Mother Support Groups
- Youth clubs
- Schools
- Village Health Sanitation & Nutrition Committee
- Caste Panchayat Leaders
- Local, State & National Government
- Media Government frontline workers at the village level (Accredited Social Health Activist, Anganwadi Workers)
- Community as a whole



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Celebration of World Menstrual Hygiene Day 28 May 2020



Organised Webinar for Adolescent Girls



Slogan Writing Competition



Yoga Session to ease Menstrual Cramps and PMS

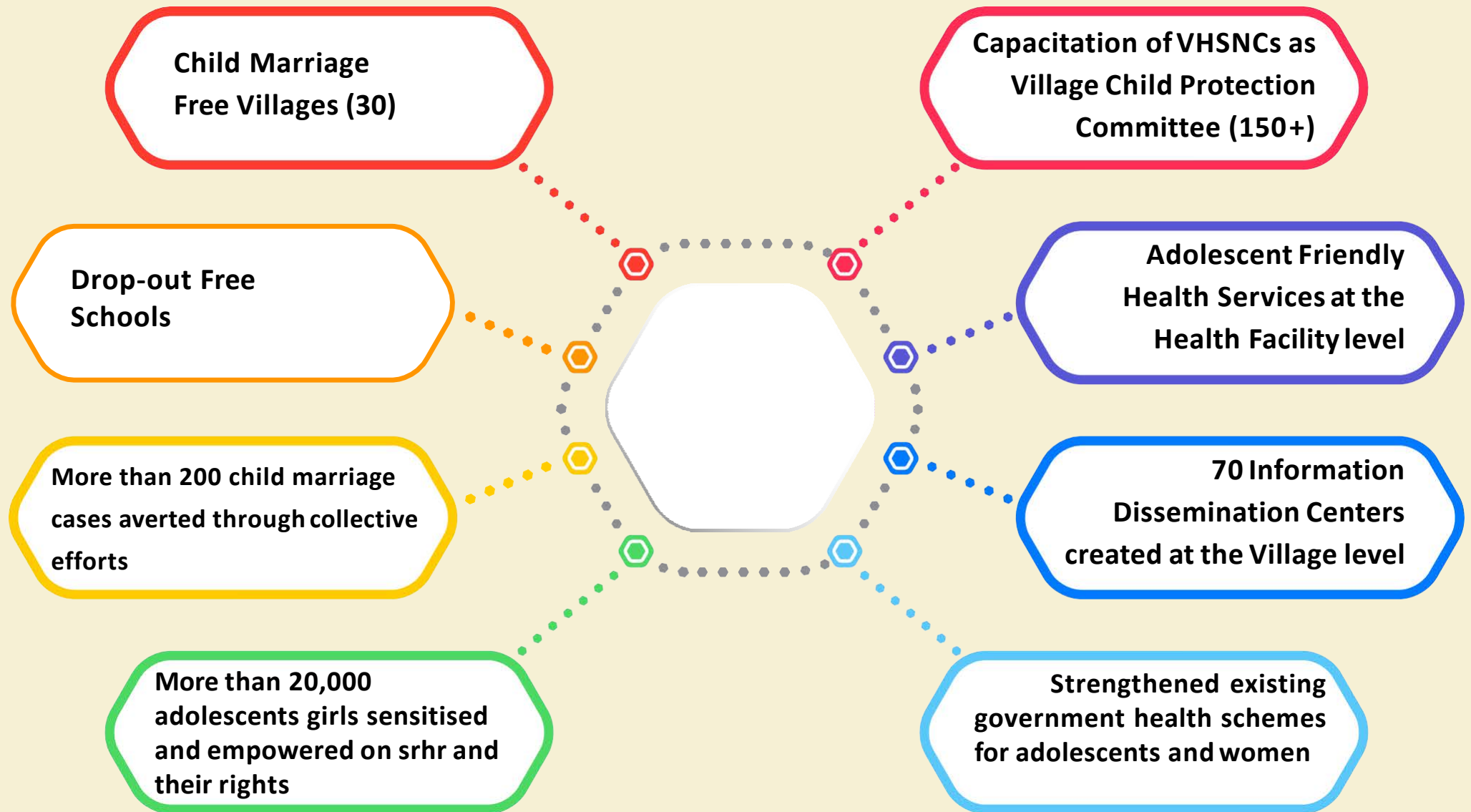
Celebration of World No Tobacco Day 31 May 2020



IEC Material for Adolescent Girls



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



WAY FORWARD

We have seen through awareness and empowerment process, the socio-economic situation of the communities can become robust and wholesome

If this evidence-based initiatives is upscaled by the government, it will dramatically change the future of 243 millions adolescents in India breaking the chains of health and gender inequity

An enabling environment already exists which is created by the government through various policies and programmes to improve the overall situation

Our effort is to ensure that the process is actualized through grass-root level efforts like this. It will further motivate the government to infuse creative evidence-based ideas in the National and State programme



“THERE ARE
NO PATHS...

PATHS ARE
MADE BY
WALKING”



**Voluntary Health
Association of India**



**MORE THAN
BRIDES
ALLIANCE**

VOLUNTARY HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

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