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**SABLA: A SCHEME FOR EMPOWERMENT OF ADOLSCENT GIRLS IN INDIA**

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**Abstract**

As being an intermediate of personality building, education is dynamic and continuous process. It starts at the time of birth and remains continue till the death. Having ability to mitigate every problem of life education is useful at every stage of life as at infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and maturity. Adolescence is transitional phase of physiological and psychological changes. Adolescents are unlimited source of capabilities and potentialities but they need proper direction to use their strength in productive way. When guided properly, adolescents play a vital role in nation building through their constructive participation in social cohesion, cultural safety, economic prosperity, political stability and humanistic philosophy. After recognizing the significance of comprehensive development of adolescents various enrichment programs are being launched and implemented throughout the world. In this way Indian government has taken various initiatives for the all-round development of adolescents and Adolescence Education Programs AEP (AEP) are started. Special considerations are given for the advancement and empowerment of adolescent girls. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG)/ 'SABLA' is one of the schemes playing significant role in upliftment, welfare and advancement of adolescent girls in villages of India. The intention of the present study is to demonstrate the functioning process, services and utility of Sabla for adolescent girls in selected districts of India.

**Keywords:-** Adolescence, Sabla/ (RGSEAG), Reproductive Health, ARSH, Home-based Skills, Life Skills and Vocational Skills.

## **Introduction**

Education is a vital tool that is being used from ancient world to contemporary world to succeed. It is important because it is used to mitigate most of the challenges faced in life. The knowledge that is attained through education helps to attain capabilities and efficiency in every aspect of life. Education is helpful in all round development of an individual. It nourishes the good qualities in individual and draw out the best in a person. Education is a lifelong dynamic process which starts at the time of birth and ends with the end of life so education is essential at every phase of life (infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and maturity). Now days, much focus is being given on education of childhood and adolescent by society and government. Government of India has launched various schemes for the upliftment and betterment of adolescents because adolescence is a developmental period in which youth begin to form an enduring sense of personal identity and self-efficiency. The term “ Adolescence” literally means “ to emerge” or “ achieve identity” . Its origin is from a Latin word “ Adolescere” meaning, “ to grow, to mature” . It is a significant phase of transition from childhood to adulthood. A universally accepted definition of the concept of adolescence has not been established, but WHO has defined it in terms of age spanning between 10-19 years. In India, the legal age of marriage is 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys. There is a high correlation between the age of marriage, fertility management and family health with education. Adolescence is a critical stage of various transitions, qualitative shifts and conflicts. And psychologists have come to recognise the fact that adolescence is a unique period of human development and progress. In this way, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) recognises the potentialities of the adolescents and various educational programs are being launched for the education, advancement and empowerment of adolescents under the title the adolescence education programme (AEP). These educational programs of adolescents provided accurate age appropriate and culturally relevant information to promote healthy attitude and responsible behaviour as a sensitive citizen. These schemes are:

- 1- Integrated child development services.
- 2- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.
- 3-National skill development programme
- 4- Pragati and Shaksam Scholarship Scheme.
- 5- Rajiv Gandhi scheme for empowerment of adolescent boys 'Saksham'
- 6- Rajiv Gandhi scheme for empowerment of adolescent girls 'Sabla'etc

## **"The Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls 'Sabla'- 2011"**

'Sabla' is a centrally sponsored programme of Government of India introduced in October 2010 and launched on April, 1st 2011 under the Ministry of Women and Child Development. In this scheme two former schemes Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY)-2000 and Nutrition Program for Adolescent Girls (NPAG) 2002-2003 was emerged to achieve the desired objectives in 200 selected districts in all States and Union Territories of India. And Kishori Shakti Yojana is continuing in remaining districts of India. Now Sabla is extended up to 303 districts of India.

### **Target Group**

The scheme covers all (school going and out of school) adolescent girls of 11-18 years under Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) projects in selected 303 districts and the target group is further divided into two categories:

- 1- Adolescent girls of 11-15 years
- 2- Adolescent girls of 15-18 years

### **Assembly/Meeting of Target Group**

All target groups use to assemble at Anganwadi Centers according to prescribed time format. Out of school adolescent girls assemble at Anganwadi centers at least 5 days in a week for day to day activities. School going adolescent girls meets at Anganwadi centers at least twice in a month or more frequently in holidays.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the Scheme are to-

- i- Enable the AGs for self-development and empowerment.
- ii- Improve their nutrition and health status.
- iii- Promote awareness about health, hygiene, nutrition, Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH) and family and child care.
- iv- Upgrade their home-based skills, life skills and tie up with National Skill Development Program (NSDP) for vocational skills.
- v- Mainstream out of school AGs into formal/non formal education.
- vi- Provide information/guidance about existing public services such as Primary Health Center, Community Health Center, Post Office, Bank, Police Station, Fir Brigade.

### **Services**

An integrated package of services is provided to AGs that follows,

**i- Nutrition Provision:-** All adolescent girls are given supplementary nutrition containing 600 calories and 18-20 grams of protein per day for 300 days in a year. The financial norms will be rupees 5 per beneficiary per day for 300 days and government of India will share the course for nutrition of adolescent girls up to extent of 50%.

**ii- Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation:-** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare provides 100 adults tablet to each AGs on Kishori Diwas. AGs are given information by ANM/AWW on food fortification, dietary diversification and advantages of IFA supplements.

**iii- Health check-up and Referral services:-** There is General Health checkup of AGs at least once in 3 months on a special day called the Kishori Diwas. Kishori cards will be prepared and maintained by marking major milestone regarding height, weight and HB by the Medical Officer or ANM.

**iv- Nutrition & Health Education (NHE):-** Sustained information on nutrition and health issues results in better health status of AGs. The information regarding healthy traditional practices, healthy cooking and eating habits, use of safe drinking water, sanitation, personal hygiene, nutritional value of components, benefits of yoga & physical exercise is provided to AGs by ANM/NGOs/CBOs/ AWCs.

**v-Counseling/Guidance on family welfare, Adolescent Reproductive and Sex Health (ARSH), child care practices and home management:-** Under this service information regarding health and family welfare, legal rights, home management and child care practices, reproductive cycle, HIV/AIDS, contraceptive majors, menstrual hygiene, marriage and pregnancy at right age, child care and child feeding practices etc. is imparted to all AGs by NGOs/CBOs and other institutes imparting models on these issues.

**vi- Home Based Skills:-** AWCs and other service provider institutes ensure to provide home based skills to AGs. These skills include healthy cooking, stitching, making self-sanitary napkins, handicraft, book-binding, mushroom cultivation, bio-fertilizers, maintenance of electronic gadgets as T.V, radio, microwave etc.

**vii- Life Skill Education and Accessing Public Services:-** Sabla makes provision of life saving skills and services which enable them with personal competence, self-confidence, self-esteem, decision making, critical thinking, communication skills, rights and entitlement, stress management and responding to peer pressure, functional literacy, adoption of healthy and positive behaviour in them. It makes them aware and confident in using the existing public services like PHC, CHC, Police Station, Bank, Fire-brigade, Educational Institutes, Post-office, PRO etc.

**viii- Vocational Training:-** All adolescent girls aged 16 and above are being provided vocational training under National Skill Development Program (NSDP) various factors such as house management and tourism, agriculture, handicraft, education, computer and IT etc.

#### **Pattern and Functional Responsibility**

As Sabla is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented through the state governments and U.Ts with 100% financial assistance from the central government for all inputs except nutrition provision for which government of India will share up to extent of 50%. The ministry of women and child development is responsible for budgetary control and administration of the scheme from the center. At the state level the Secretary of Department of Women and Child Development/ Social Welfare dealing with ICDS is responsible for all over direction and implementation of the scheme. The Director and other officers dealing with ICDS are responsible to implement Sabla and it is implemented by AWCs.

#### **Cost of Project**

Rupees approximately 450 crore per is provided by government of India to states and UTs which include cost of training kit at each AWC, nutrition and health education, life skill education, vocational training, Flexi-funds for transportation, printing of adjusters health cards and referral services etc.

#### **Monitoring, Supervision and Records Evaluation**

The monitoring and supervision mechanism is completed by ICDS scheme at national level, state level and community level. Record registers is maintained by AWW at the AWC with the assistance of Sakhi/Saheli. Evaluation is completed by States or UTs through baseline survey and situational analysis.

#### **Training**

All around development of AGs are being carried out by ICDS functionaries (CDPOs Supervisor's or AWW). The training of Home base skills, life skills and vocational skills are being provided by training programs and orientation programs by AWW, ANM Asha, Sakhi/Saheli, ICDs and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.

#### **Convergence, Community Awareness-Generation**

Convergence of program is in action through various schemes of health, education, youth affairs and sports, labour etc. The awareness is being generated for the supply in society for their involvement at ground level. Sensitization programs for the parents, adolescents and community are also being taken up under it by involving NGOs/ CBOs/Civil Society Organizations.

## **Outcomes**

- 1- Increased confidence, self-esteem and decision making among adolescent girls.
- 2- Increased understanding and awareness on physiological and psychological changes during adolescence.
- 3- Increased understanding on nutrition and health maintenance.
- 4- The understanding of adolescents is increased about sexual problem and harassment.
- 5- Increased school enrollment of adolescent girls.
- 6- Adolescent girls are more active and aware about social and community services to use them according to their needs.
- 7- Safe spaces for adolescent girls to interact at village level more confidently and independently.
- 8- Adolescent girls are becoming more capable in utilising the community and social services like Primary Health Centers, Community Health Centre, Post Office, Police Station, Bank services, fire brigade etc.
- 9- Adolescent girls are becoming more competent and independent through the knowledge of life and home skills like healthy cooking and eating practices, handicraft, shoe-making, shoe-polishing, animal husbandry, mushroom cultivation, bio-fertilizer production, car painting, book binding, stitching, maintenance of electronic gadgets etc.
- 10- Training of vocational skills through National Skill Development Programme adolescent girls have become more competent, self-dependent and economically strong.

## **Limitations**

- 1- Sabla is limited only to 303 districts.
- 2- The major responsibility of Sabla is given to Anganwadi workers, Asha workers and ANMs who themselves are not much competent and qualified in adolescents' behavioural, sociological, physiological and psychological needs.
- 3- Insufficient budget for the full implementation of Sabla at grass root level.
- 4- There is lack of formal placement after home skills and vocational skills training of adolescent girls.
- 5- Lack of experts, qualified and competent specialists is there.

## **Conclusion**

No doubt there are some limitations of Sabla scheme in implementation and orientation at universal level by experts but the scheme has played and is playing a vital role for the betterment of adolescent girls. The scheme is significantly useful for the empowerment,

Independence, upliftment, empowerment and vocational skill development of adolescent girls. There is need of proper implementation of all provisions of the scheme for more significant results.

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