

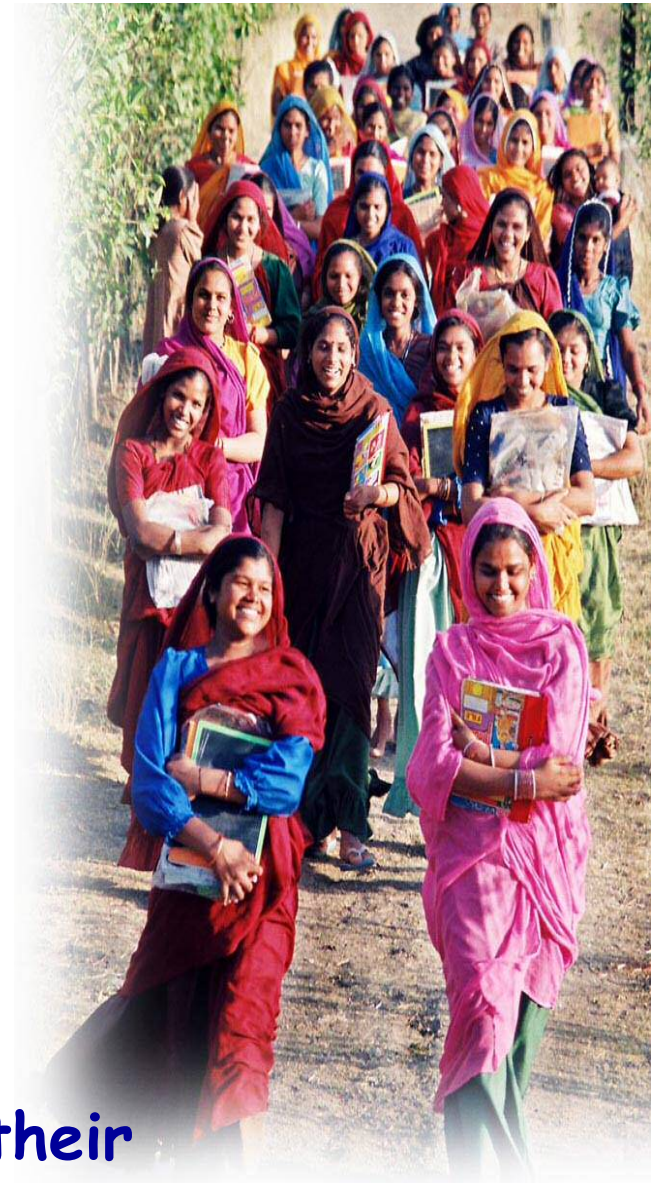
Peer Based Approach to Community Learning Centres



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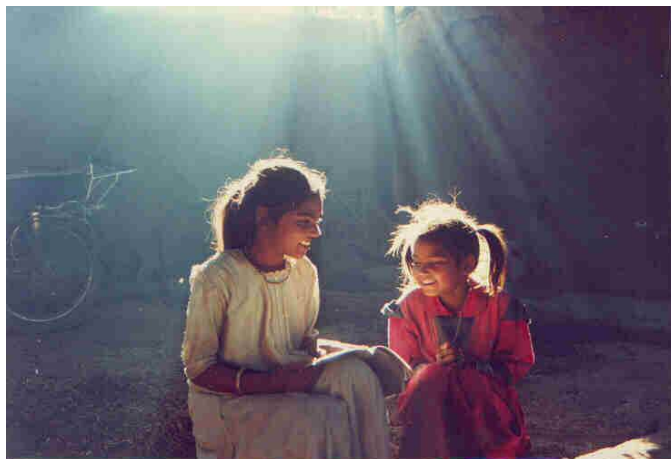
Context

- ★ CLCs set up in nearly 60 remote villages
- ★ Target group for CLCs being adolescent girls aged 12-20 years
- ★ The girls were primarily illiterate/ school dropouts
- ★ Majority belonged to Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes/ Other Backward Classes
- ★ Most girls had never been outside their village



Why Focus on Adolescents ?

- ★ Constitute 22% of population
- ★ Adolescence a critical period in life span
- ★ Invisible and ignored group
- ★ Limited opportunities available
- ★ Adolescents have special needs



“The adolescent girl still remains a young plant that neither gets light nor water. She remains the flower that could have blossomed but didn't.....”

Kamla Bhasin
from “Our Daughters”

Young girls in India

- ★ 113 million are adolescent girls
- ★ Female illiteracy- 35%
- ★ Gender gap in literacy - 16%
- ★ Low status of women - only 50% of women participate in household decision making
- ★ Early marriage and child bearing - 47% of girls are married before 18 years with substantial proportion begin childbearing in first year of marriage.
- ★ Alarming rate of maternal death - a woman dies every 10 minutes due to pregnancy related complications
- ★ Over 50% experience domestic violence
- ★ Sex Ratio 940/1000 males



Program Objective

- ★ To empower rural adolescent girls by establishing community learning centres at village level using a peer based approach and evolve a sustainable model of empowerment



Issues

How do we . . .

- ★ meet specific needs of adolescents for education
- ★ expand life choices for adolescents
- ★ empower adolescents using a sustainable model
- ★ build skills among adolescent girls to be change agents and peer educators



Approach

- ★ CLC set up at village level to empower girls
- ★ Literate woman from community trained as CLC facilitator



Challenges

- ★ Difficult to identify a literate woman from within the community to work as facilitator
- ★ Resistance from the parents to send the girls to CLCs
- ★ Sustainability of CLCs owing to limited resources
- ★ Upscaling to reach out to a wider number of adolescents specially in disadvantaged situations



Strategies Adopted

- ★ Girls' groups in the villages formed into Forums called 'Navyuvti Mandals'
- ★ 2-3 girls from each village identified as change agents and trained as peer educators in 3 months' residential training program
- ★ Peer educator girls started working as CLC facilitators and imparted literacy, life skills and livelihood skills to other girls
- ★ This evolved into an empowerment model called Better Life Options and Opportunities Model

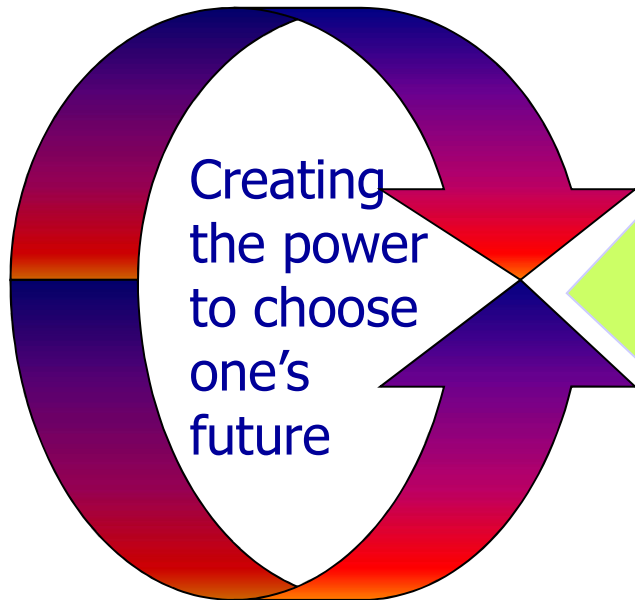


Better Life Options And Opportunities Model (BLOOM)

Age-appropriate Reproductive and general Health Services

Community Mobilization

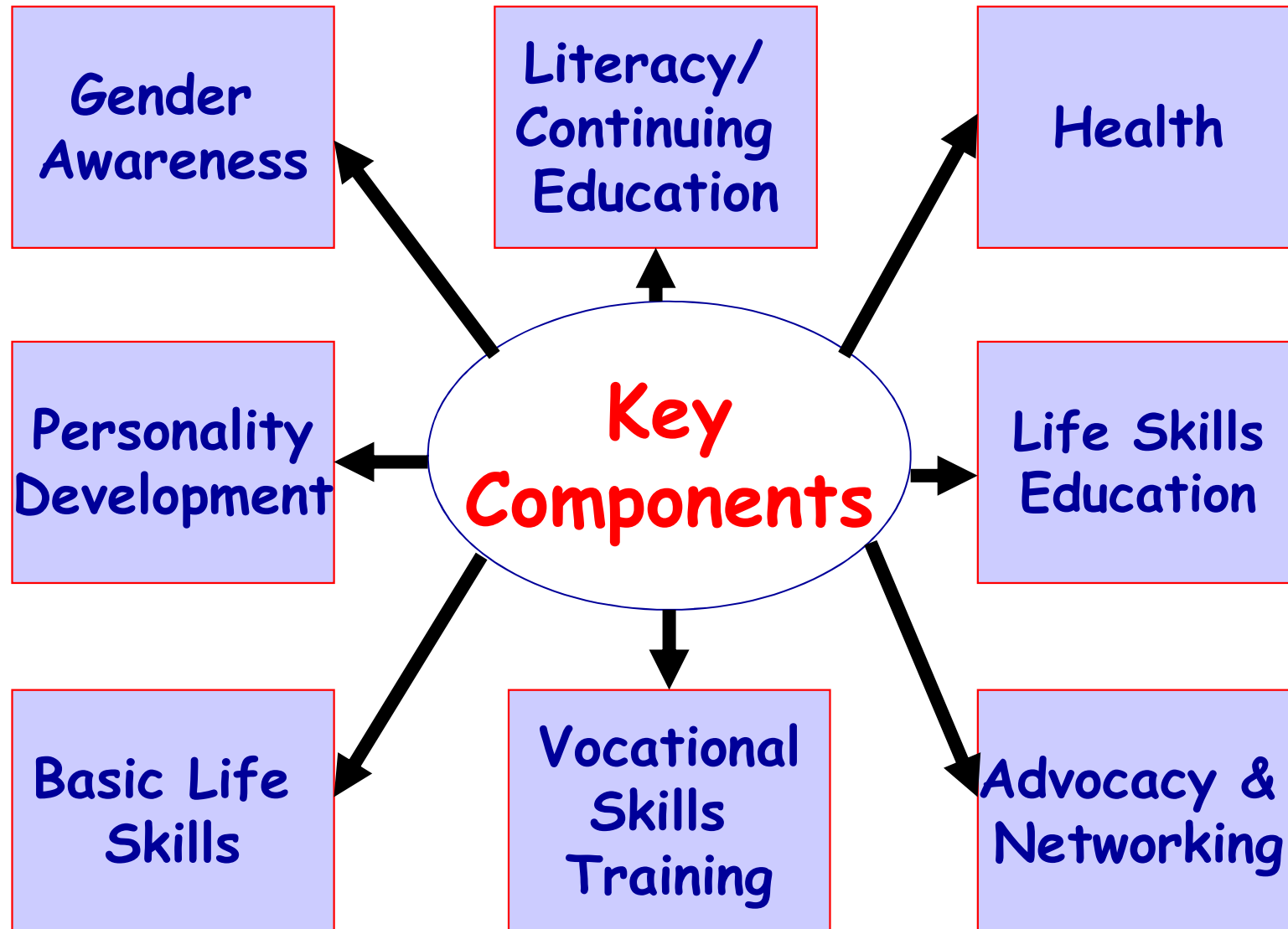
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Individual Skills Building

Advocacy



Program Impact



- ★ Impact study conducted taking experimental group & control group
- ★ Study showed tremendous increase not only in knowledge levels of girls but also in behaviour pattern/ practices
- ★ The program had a ripple effect. Girls trained as peer educators impacted lives of thousands of other girls and are still continuing to do so
- ★ Navyuvti Mandals starting with cultural activities took upon themselves many community development initiatives

Impact on Girls

Significant change in the following parameters:

- ★ Higher level of educational attainment
- ★ Lowering of school dropout rate
- ★ Economic empowerment - 4 time increase in self employment
- ★ Better role in decision making, improved communication skills and mobility
- ★ Improvement in health & nutritional status of girls
- ★ Increase in age at marriage by 3-4 years
- ★ Significant increase in adoption of family planning practices, immunization, antenatal care and institutional deliveries



Impact on Community

- ★ CLCs played a significant role in reducing gender discrimination in community
- ★ Parents' attitude towards the girls changed significantly as they started taking pride in their daughters' achievements
- ★ Community started owning the CLC as they were involved in decision making right from the planning stage
- ★ With small contribution from the community and nominal fee offered by the girls to the peer educators, the CLCs could become self-sustaining



Successes & Best Practices



- ★ Peer educators voluntarily carrying out the activities in their own communities
- ★ Girls have become Balwadi teachers, school teachers, community worker in government schemes, run their own centers, have become self employed.
- ★ Community development initiatives taken up by Navyuvti Mandals

Community Development Initiatives

Navyuvti Mandals formed as part of strategy took up many community development initiatives such as:

- ★ Removing liquor shop from the villages which was near to CLC
- ★ Motivating parents towards enrolment and retention of children in schools
- ★ Generating awareness about women's reproductive health issues
- ★ Making benefit of government schemes available to the people



The Ripple Effect

- ★ The empowerment model that got evolved with 250 girls from 10 villages, has now reached out to nearly 300,000 girls in Madhya Pradesh
- ★ The training manuals developed extensively used all over the country by Government agencies and NGOs
- ★ Peer educator girls who took part in the 3 months' residential training were instrumental in imparting skills to other girls in their own community and beyond.



Lessons Learned



- ★ Involvement of community in decision making is essential for community to own the program
- ★ To reduce the gender gap, boys' programs should also be carried out
- ★ Need to network and have many more partners to increase the outreach
- ★ Sustainability not only in terms of financial sustainability but can also be achieved by building human resources needed to sustain the program

Thank You !

