

Marginalisation, Inclusion and Empowerment - Understanding the Relationship and Processes in Lives of Girls

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Abstract: This paper is an attempt to define and analyse nuances of inclusion in context of marginalised children especially in a state like Uttar Pradesh. It explores principles that can be adopted to address inclusion within education processes, with involvement of community collectives to question the existing power equations and gender stereotypes in the society. The findings presented in the paper are basically qualitative observation, perception and inferences. The paper is based on experiences of Girls' education program, of CARE India, a development organization, working in India for past 52 years. In the journey, the paper tries to explore what marginalisation is, as it observed, interpreted and manifested. It looks on how in a defined social context, criteria's for marginalisation gets evolved -in terms of set indicators like access to resources, power, ability to exercise human rights, recognition-both individual and societal recognition beyond others.

Pertaining to this reality of marginalisation, efforts are made to understand how educational processes can help create an inclusive enabling environment for children, especially girls a) to feel part of the process and b) feel empowered from the same. The paper tries to highlight some core principles that have evolved from CARE India's work in understanding the above questions.

Building on the above context, the paper tries to present a case that whenever education tries to imbibe some of the stated principles of inclusion in its vision and processes, empowerment becomes the result of such a process. This is reflected as minor changes in children's lives, which the paper tries to highlight as major milestones towards their empowerment.

1. Introduction

In context of education, for long the focus of attention has been on children till the age of 14 – an age group which encompasses both childhood (6-10 years) and early adolescence (11-14 years). The concern has been on whether these children have been enrolled in school or are engaged in economic activity and whether 'education for all' (EFA) targets have been met. Some studies have also looked at reasons behind their low participation, poor retention and transition in Education. Before delving into factors that hinder holistic development of girls at adolescent stage, there is a need to understand the lives of adolescent girls and the context in which they live especially in rural societies.

In rural societies of developing countries, the period of adolescence is of enormous interest and of considerable complexity, transiting swiftly between childhood and adulthood [1]. This stage

encompasses the stage of sexual maturation where exact demarcation between stages blurs.¹ Adolescence is also seen as a time of psychological risk and heightened vulnerability for girls since adolescents move early into adulthood, in fact the girl steps easily into adult roles missing ‘adolescence phase’ completely. The lives of adolescent boys resemble the lives of adult men – their concern range from remunerative work to abundance of freedom and mobility than before, and some are even married by this age. Adolescent girls in most rural villages, particularly once past puberty, have much less freedom and mobility other than psychological needs. Prior to adolescence, many girls are able to voice their feelings and demonstrate a strong sense of self. When they reach puberty, either they are torn between pressures to conform to a dominant cultural ideal of “selfless” femininity and womanhood or to move toward maturity through separation and independence. They are further hampered because there is huge resistance by adults to listen to girls. As a result, adolescent girls often lose their voices [2]. On the other hand, *for boys, adolescence means greater possibilities and a broadening world, for girls it means greater limitations*. “On the whole, adolescent girls in developing countries like India spend less time in school than boys as they perform a disproportionate share of domestic work, have less mobility outside the home and fewer acceptable public spaces for leisure activity, and make friends” [3]. Such situations limit the opportunities for adolescent girls especially of those who are out of school for a number of reasons. Gurain emphasizes that ‘*A girl’s relationships, intimacies, sports activities, art and musical activities, as well as academic learning during the ten-to-twelve period have a great likelihood of “sticking” or at least “reappearing” later in her life because of their interconnection with the massive brain growth. There is also a greater likelihood that she will not be as good at things she didn’t practice during these two years.... Yet it is amazing to see how often it does work out that what we care about in early adolescence resurfaces in later adolescence, and throughout life* (pg 39-40) [4]’.

Many studies suggest that lives of girls revolve more around the home where they are either engaged in household chores and economic work or both, and most of those in the 15-18 age group will be married and even had their first child. A multi-state study from India states that life of adolescent girl is also determine by social and economic factors such as poverty and education level of household [1]. Acute poverty impacts entire family though affecting the girl child most, as it limits her opportunities irrespective of its nature. It also means that their engagement in low paying jobs like agriculture and rearing livestock, where the role of education was less significant. Parents too have lower aspirations due to gender considerations and it is further narrow down by cultural and social hierarchy [1].

In this context, it becomes imperative to understand ‘factors affecting adolescent girls’ and understanding how these factors impact their lives. This paper therefore explores concept of marginalization in context of girls and how it articulated and defined by girls and more so in context of education. The study draws upon experience of CARE, a development organization that is working to address issue of marginalization affecting girls through education processes in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, India. CARE, a development agency, recognizes pervasive gender inequity at various levels in India, aims to **facilitate lasting change in the well- being and social position of vulnerable groups, especially women.**

2. Defining Marginalization and Inclusion in context of Girl Child

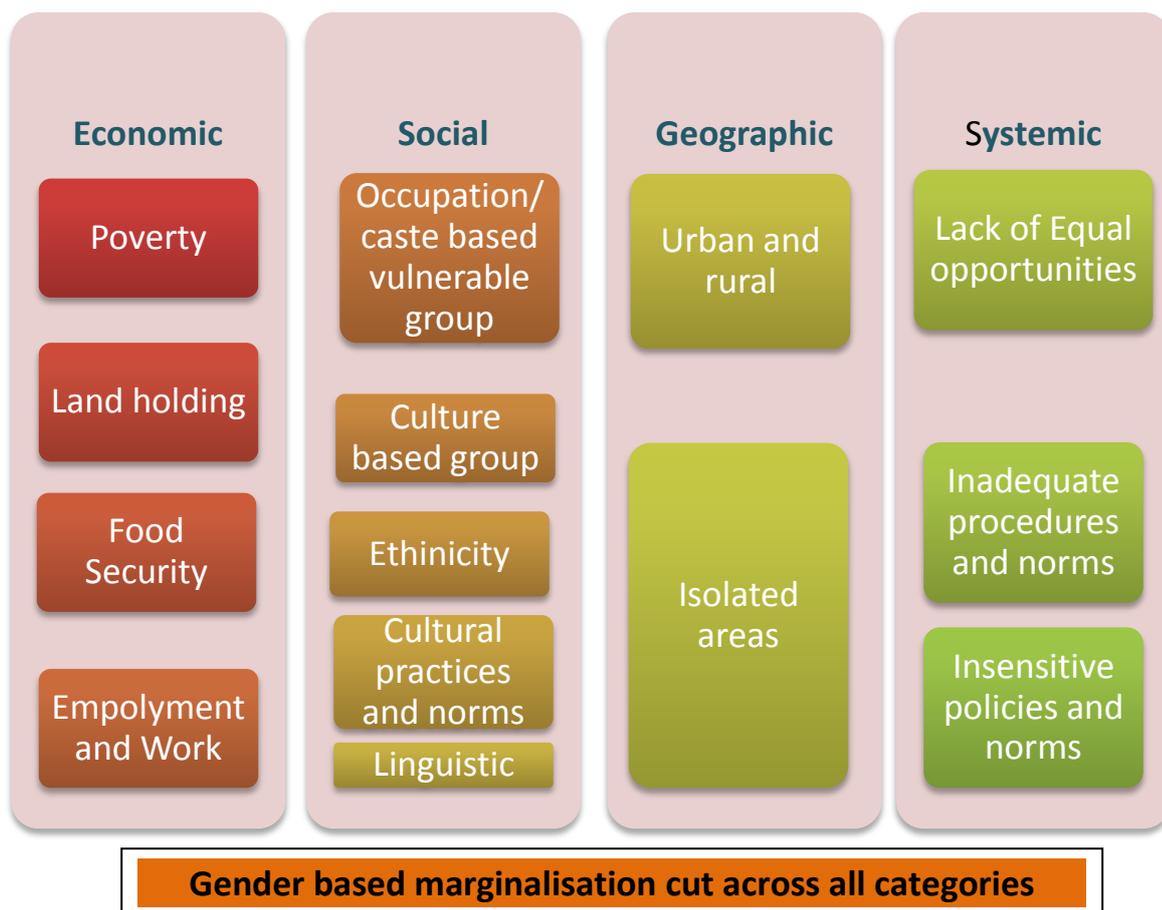
In general, the concept of ‘marginalization’ rest on principle of exclusion where a certain set of people or community are deprived from their rights due to endogenous and exogenous factors. The endogenous factors vary from gender, ethnicity, linguistic to race while exogenous factors include poverty, geography location, lifestyle etc. Both set of factors manifest into varied deprivation and intensity such as limited participation in decision making and having lesser number of opportunities, low self esteem, lack of identity, limited access to educational and health services,

¹ The UN refers to the 15-24 age group as young people.

restricted mobility, exploitation, abuse etc. A set of deprivation is economic in nature as limited access to economic resources but larger issue is of social exclusion or marginalization which completely outcast people or communities those face it.

It is common in heterogeneous, stratified societies, across ethnic groups, class, languages, and customs, with groups sometimes separated by geography. What distinguishes social exclusion from simple separatism are the invidious social evaluations (in terms of differences in honor, respect, esteem, and the like) that are accorded the excluded group by a dominant social group and that may even be shared by the excluded group [5]. Hence, a large section of community or people face 'multiple marginalisation' at a given time. If we tried to understand the same in context of India, nature of marginalisation varies from state to state and community to community. However, gender based marginalization cut across all categories. Generally, marginalisation can be clubbed in to four categories. The below box tries to illustrate nature of exclusion observed in India primarily in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh.

Box 1: Factor of Marginalisation: An illustrative nature



As listed above, people or communities could be marginalised based on any of the above factors or more due to which they could be relegated to secondary position in the society. The researches that examine varied communities establish that out of all groups, girl children are most vulnerable since they are accorded secondary position and are not considered equal as boys across geographies, culture and caste.

In context of India, social deprivation and marginalisation arising out of ascribed status of caste, tribe, religion and gender is common in many parts. The fact that majority *dalit* households own little or no land suggests that these groups continue to be economically dependent on dominant castes and are hence socially vulnerable [6]. Caste in Indian society interacts with education of

children from poor families at two levels; one because of the correspondence with poverty and the other due to exclusion from a number of social processes, including education.

A study conducted by CARE (2008) in rural Uttar Pradesh to understand factors affecting girls and their marginalisation provided detailed account of girls' situation within home and in the school [7]. It was found that most girls had less time to play than boys and having limited hours for their self and spend more time working at household level which affects their participation in education. Furthermore, parents as well as teachers were found to have differential aspiration and qualities for boys and girls. The parents aspire that their son get a fulfilling job and a secured future after completing education while they visualize their daughters to be 'married off' or being a good housewife. The qualities that teachers intended to have in girl students were being 'docile' 'shy', 'cooperative', home maker, adjusting etc while they desired that boys be confident, vocal, in control of situation, breadwinner and problem solver. Half of the parents interviewed believed that girls and boys have differential pace of learning, especially with discipline like math, where girls were seen as slow learners. One third of teachers also believed that girls and boys have differential learning needs that it would benefit girls if they would learn more vocational skills. Parents believed that both boys and girls learning are impacted by work at home.

Such differential aspirations that parents and teachers have from boys and girls eventually reflect on children opportunity to participate in the school and other educational opportunities provided to them. It also further manifest as negative self-worth, lower confidence, in terms of overall personality development in children.

In the same study, responses of both boys and girls showed that gender based division extended from at different spheres from work at home to the games they play in school and the way children participate in classroom. Girls and boys hardly questioned societal practices and norms. It was seen that both succumbed to work division as per traditionally accepted gender roles. In this the reason for why girls were not aiming to go into work options other than the traditional ones, one of the predominant reasons that they felt were due to existing insecure environment for girls to pursue them. Most boys felt that girls should not be allowed to go out alone, hinting that gender stereotypes set in early. Further this became more intense, if a child belongs to marginalised community.

If we try to understand the same in context of education, experiences show that there are several reasons and factors due to which children especially girl child from marginalised communities have limited access to educational opportunities. Analysis of CARE experiences show that even if they get enrolled in the school, generally girls are met with indifferent behaviour and attitude on the part of teachers and are confronted with structural barriers that hinder their educational experiences. The school is marked by fear and there is lack of effort in making school conducive for the girl child. Analysis of classroom process reflected that content of social issues were hardly taken up in a reflective manner, they are more taken up in a prescriptive fashion. Emphasis is on passing on existing socio norms and stereotypes without questioning and understanding the rationality in why they are so, and understanding whether these can these be altered. It was also observed that the classroom experiences seldom fail to relate to experiences with the lives of the children leading to some kind of exclusion. Interaction with teachers confirmed that most teachers attend to and encourage a few 'bright' children and tend to teach with a distinct focus on them, while ignoring other children. All children do not receive adequate and equitable teacher attention. These are some of the conditions within school system due to which girls are marginalised further.

CARE further tried to understand how adolescent girls define marginalization. It was found that girls defined this in terms of fewer opportunities especially for games and play in contrast to boys. This was equally substantiated by boys themselves. About 40% boys believed that no other opportunities existed for girls except those created by girls themselves for play and spending time with friends. In contrast, more than 90% boys and girls perceived better facilities are available for boys for games and sports. Boys' games and sports essentially involve playing cricket, *kabaddi*, football, ring or other such sports that require a large play field. 90% Girls perceived that playgrounds were available for boys but not for girls [8]. Interaction with 212 girls revealed that

they have lower aspiration, desire and leadership. It was found that nearly 57% of girls wanted to participate in out of home activities simply to enjoy and ‘feel good.’ Such a finding is indicative of the level of deprivation that the girls feel in engaging in social activities. Lack of appropriate outlets for girls to freely express their potential, to discover their self-worth is attributed to the subordinated lives they live at home and in school.

Girls were found to have very simple desires like they wished to undertake simple group activities just because they like doing it together. “*Acchha lagta hai*” was the general response received from girls. As majority of girls were not permitted to go outside their villages and have restricted mobility within their own, they desired activities to be organized within their own villages. Girls aspired to learn new skills including music and artistic activities as compared to their needs for games and play.

When asked on the major barriers that restrict their participation majority of girls mentioned seeking parental permission, pressure of domestic work, availability of facilities at distant place, eve teasing, and social stigma, lack of opportunities and financial resources as some of the constraints for their current non- participation in various activities out of home setting.

Box-2: Definition of Rights and its relation with marginalisation as perceived by girls

Right	Girls perception
Quality Health Care	Physical fitness, good and nutritious food (<i>achcha, paushtik khan paan</i>) (good/nutritious food gives us strength- <i>ache ahar se takat milti hai</i>), Existence of hospitals and health care centers, we should be allowed to go and get medicine when required, should be allowed to receive medicine and care, everybody should care about their health, cure to be available for all diseases (<i>beemarion se bachav ka upchar milna chhahiye</i>), <i>paalan-poshan</i> (bring up children properly, food, care), <i>khel-kood</i> and right to play for good health (<i>khelne ka adhikar acchi sehat ke liye</i>),
Quality Education	<i>Padhna likhna hai, kuch samajhna hai</i> , we should go to school, everybody should (study) be educated (<i>sabko padha likha hona chhahiye</i>), we also should be allowed to get educated, ‘if parents tell us to study we study, when they stop us, we do not study further; <i>padhne ka adhikar</i> (right to receive education), good education; ‘to receive and spread knowledge to others— <i>jaanana and doosron tak gyan pahunchana</i>); <i>padhai karna-padhai karke main doctor banoongi</i> , should get books to study, existence of Primary school and education about equality (<i>prathamik shiksha and samanta ki shiksha</i>);
Respect	People should show care while talking to all children alike, <i>hamein maan (izzat/respect) dena</i> , <i>sabko samman milna chhahiye</i> , <i>izzat pane ka haq</i> (right to receive respect), <i>khoob izzat</i> (we should get much respect); <i>log Namaste karein</i> (<i>people should greet one another/ say namaste</i>), we should get respect like others,
Decision Making	We should be allowed to decide about our future, stick to our decision, right to decide when we want to study, people should accept what we say/ tell them (about what we want) ‘ <i>hamaari baat maani jaye</i> ’, should be allowed to do what we want to do; <i>mushkil suljhana</i> (<i>problem solving</i>), <i>agle vidyalaya mein jahan padhna chhahein uska faisla ham karein</i> -we can decide where we want to study further; <i>kisi kaarya ko karne ya naa karne ka svayam ka faisla</i> (to decide whether we want or do not want to do some work), when elders take decisions about us- we should be asked what we want; be included in decision making,

Equality/ Gender Equality	Girls and boys to be treated equally, equal food, clothing, everything- <i>khana/kapada, sab kuch as per need</i> , we should be allowed to go out freely, treated on same parameters (<i>barabari ka darza milna chahiye har baat par</i> , no differentiation between brothers and sisters, if boys do not take permission while going out- girls should also not seek permission; <i>bhaiya log bhi ghar se pooch kar jaayen</i> (brothers/other boys etc should also seek permission when going out of homes), <i>samaan nazron se ladkiyon va ladkon ko dekhna</i> (see girls and boys equally), <i>bhai ke barabar padhai – sab kuch-</i> get education equal to that of brothers- in fact everything- equal to theirs.
Protection from Harm	If people fight, or beat others, we should help them, people (elders in position) should help, we should be protected from physical and mental harm- <i>kashta na ho, chot na lage, shareer ko nuksaan na pahunche</i>)to protect ourselves from others (if people ill-treat us/ misbehave with us)-also in cases of eve-teasing- <i>ched chad na ho</i> , right to protect ourselves (from any danger)- <i>apni raksha ka adhikar</i> , nobody should beat without any reason (<i>bematlab koi na peete</i>), <i>koi maar peet na kare</i> , no-body should scold or beat, no fighting/ beating so that our village is protected.
Expression	We should be allowed to speak/ say what we want to say, <i>man ki baat kehna, bolna-sabke saamne</i> (to speak in front of others), to be able to tell parents what we want to say, <i>ham apni baat kehna chhahte hain lekin kah nahin paate hain</i> -(we want to say what is in our mind but are unable to say), <i>apni soch ko school, ghar aur samudaya mein abhiviyakti ka adhikar</i> (right to speak our thoughts in front of people at home, school and outside community), freedom to speak what we want to, opportunity to speak out our minds (<i>baat karne ka mauka</i>).

Note: Analysis of girls' responses to what they understand by marginalisation and rights, Uttar Pradesh- excerpts from a study conducted by CARE [8]

The above table describes that opportunities, participation and mobility of girls are limited due to prevailing social norms that are highly restrictive for girls to enable them to develop to their full potential. The villages provide little opportunity both in school, and outside within the community, where girls can develop intellectually, acquire social skills and attitudes, pursue vocational and life skills, which can help them in developing their self confidence and in empowering them in many ways.

Girls express the non existence of outlets to express themselves creatively. The society at large reflects low gender sensitivity and concerns for women's rights in general and girls' rights in particular. The perception of girls on all basic rights is restricted in getting access to these rights at the initial level. There is clear marginalization in terms lack of awareness, access, having impact on the girls innate capacities.

Manifestation of marginalization in terms of inadequate capacities and compromised capabilities in girl child is summarized below

Inadequate Capacities	Compromised Capabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor health especially reproductive health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early marriage/ adolescent pregnancies

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal sex ratio • Low representation of women in governance and decision making process • Access and control over services and resources • Violence against women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricted Mobility • Low confidence, lack of ability to articulate, not being able to make decisions, choices, insufficient opportunities to avail services and rights etc
Having poor self-esteem	

3. Understanding Educational Principles and Processes that can promote inclusion and empowerment of the girl child

CARE in its work understands that marginalisation of girls or women is not women' issue but a people' issue – hence looks at gender relations within all programming. It further believes that construction of power of one determines the construction of power of the other therefore building the agency of girls is important. Within the paradigm set by the organization, education is seen as an important tool in enabling women and girls to participate in decisions that affect their life and in improving their social status. Addressing these root causes, CARE India, Girls' Education Program (GEP) has the goal to *improve life opportunities for girls and women through their increased participation in formal and alternative education*. Through a learning continuum and empowerment framework, the program sees education as a tool to address marginalization. The emphasis is on creating opportunities and tools that build skills/concept which can promote domains like self-worth, problem solving, negotiation, coping skills, and critical thinking that are required to counter marginalization.

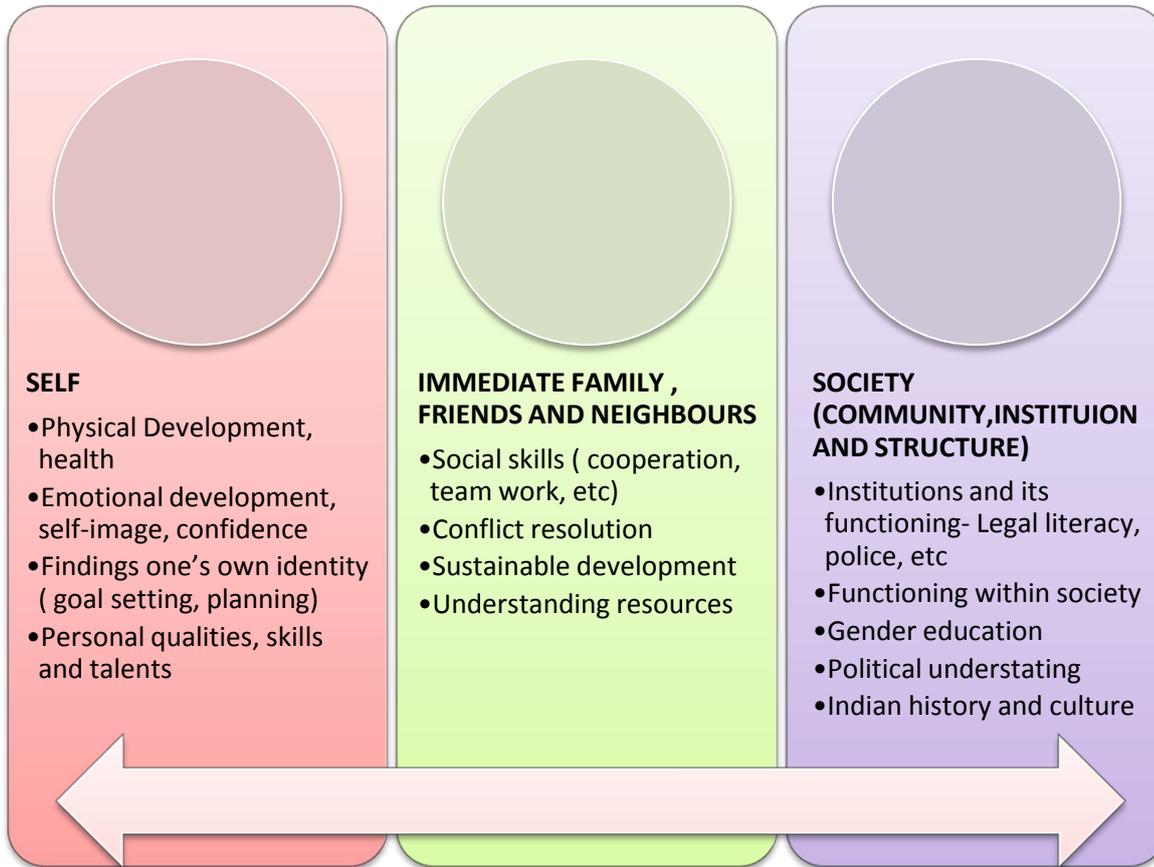
The program believes that education process can work towards building agency, improve gender relations, helps in reexamining conditioned responses to stereotypes, eventually help in opening up opportunities that were so far denied to girls. Based on the experience, the Education program has identified three key principles which can help in addressing issues of marginalization in children especially in girls, which are:

1. Education needs to engross with the lives of the children this includes- their poverty, health, society, and livelihood. This is basic premise for an inclusive curriculum, education can never be considered as a minimalistic tool driven towards acquiring numeracy and literacy.
2. Education process needs to be acknowledged as a facilitative process to construct and deconstruct three important layers of an individual - self , family, and society
3. The main objective of Education is to use it as a reflective tool to accept and to discriminate. To accept knowledge and legacy that the society has given, to discriminate, to question the stereotypical norms which the society imposes.

Based on above principles, a curriculum was designed as part of the education program to develop competencies that will adept girls to take control of their life which would help in their participation and decision making processes. These skills and competencies are facilitative in fostering *Leadership skills in girls*.

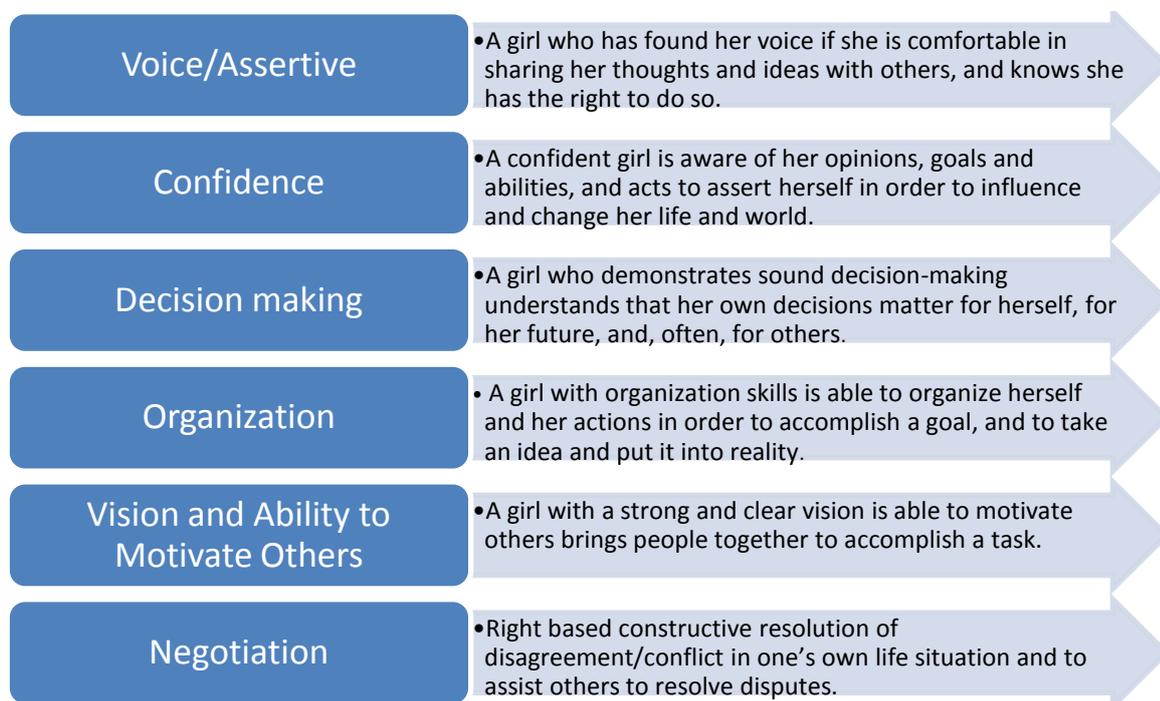
The mode was through creation of safe spaces through collectives that would provide space for the girls to reflect and voice on three planes-self, family and society .To facilitate the process, a curriculum was developed exploring these three planes, with focus on understanding that self of the learner as its epicenter and using this it tried to explore relationships and constructs at the family and society level by building understanding on the diversity and inequities that exists at every level. The curriculum framework focused upon:

Box 3: A Curriculum Framework



The curriculum further aimed to provide opportunities that help in instilling following leadership competencies/ skills in girl children.

Manifestation or interpretation of different leadership domains



3.1 Processes used to Promote Inclusion and Empowerment

The program has been implemented in underdeveloped, extremely backward villages of Bahraich and Balrampur District from Uttar Pradesh. In terms of socio-economic indicators both districts are highly marginalised and show poor indicators. For example, female literacy rate is 28.2 percent in Bahriach while this is about ²² percent in Balrampur. The program has been operational from year 2009- 2011 in total 245 villages. Early marriage, unsafe environment for girls, traditional and stereotypical roles and expectations from women apart from the poverty are some of the factors that influence the opportunities available to adolescent girls. In these areas, local traditions and customs inhibit overall development and empowerment of women in general and of young girls in particular. The above context prompted a need for an intervention that could help girls to build reflective skills and competencies to deal with issues related to her life and surroundings confidently and from a position of strength. At all levels, it was ensured the opportunities provided help girls to understand, analyse and reflect, identify issues and solutions to move forward.

The pedagogies that was adopted by curriculum use reflective techniques, emphasizing that girls not only gain knowledge apart from subject matter but also questions and reflect on matter that affects them, their peer, family and community. The main processes of the initiatives are:

3.1.1 Creating Reflective and Safe Forum in the Village: In order to develop girls' confidence, voice, decision making, organization skills, girls' collectives were formed in all 245 villages through consultative process. A number of village meetings were organized in order to mobilize girls to come together. The leadership curriculum as described above guided the activities of girls' collective. Around 30 girls in each collective were enrolled who met bi-monthly. They discussed their problems with the help of a mentor. A local female person acted as a 'mentor' who encouraged girls to come together and share their concerns. In the meetings, other than the grievances, girls were introduced to new knowledge domains, as part of the leadership curriculum. The curriculum focused on building on their perspective and conceptual clarity on their self, beginning from identity -ranging from physical to sexual identity to themes like family, health, nutrition, governance, local institutions.

In this process, girls are given opportunities to express through various mediums such as role-play, debate, brainstorming, focused group discussions, reading and story telling. Girls get together, work on projects related to their local issues, meet concerned people from the village, initiate civic action and take it to a logical closure. Through this process, girls are encouraged to continue their education and are motivated to engage in different kinds of tasks beyond household duties which facilitate them in learning important aspects of decision making, organization skills and begin to work with others. The scope of discussion in the meetings has been on self & surroundings, and schemes as well as challenges faced by girls at home and in the classroom. In all discussion, issue pertaining to unequal opportunities, participation and resource sharing was integral where girls got enough opportunity to reflect on equity and gender issues (as illustrated in box).

Example

- Cleanliness - notion examined in context of health and context, cleaning of toilets and its relationship to caste examined
- Marriage - right age of marriage, how is marriage performed, ceremonies, marriage and expenses, dowry etc
- Diversity - meaning of difference, manifestation in the world around us, reactions to the difference, interdependence, social and cultural diversity, diversity and hierarchy, sensitivity and respect for diversity

This initiative encouraged a number of girls to re-enroll themselves in schools and continue their education. Girls negotiated with their parents to help them attend school regularly.

3.1.2 Developing Extra opportunities for girls to exhibit their voice: In order to build voice of girls, girls were given opportunities to exercise the skills, and also be seen and heard in the school and community. The strategy which was taken at the community level was through initiating civic action. This helped in stimulating a spirit of community goodwill and also encouraged community stakes in girls' development. Civic activities (actions to engage with community) provided girls the experience to be active citizens. Through civic action and project, community issues were explored and understood- like organizing enrolment drive, health camps, cleanliness drives and plantation around schools in their respective villages. These experiences helped girls to organize themselves for a collective action. It further provided opportunity in using their skills and competencies for larger good by being part of change process.

As part of strategy in the schools opportunities for girls were encouraged by providing experiences within classroom and also importantly outside in the form of participation in events like sports, debate, cultural. To build sense of accountability and governance, children committees were formed, where children worked in a democratic fashion. Through this they delegated responsibilities among themselves and were accountable for its completion. This ensured active and meaningful participation among girls and helps them to groom themselves as leaders, who could work in teams, communicate, negotiate, take decisions and most important be accountable.

3.1.3 Creating supporters at community level: The program focused to develop supporters and advocates of girls' collectives. Local people like Auxiliary Midwives (ANMs), para health workers (ASHAs), *Aaganwadi* worker (AWWs), Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) members, Para teachers etc from the community were part of the support group who motivated girls to come up with a goal and aspire for the same in their life. **In the change process, boys were also seen as an important stakeholders and supporters to the girls' rights. Hence, in the schools, boys' collectives were formed.** This was done to sensitize them on equity issues and facilitating a process of socialization so that they become advocates for girls rights in their families and community. Regular interaction with community and panchayat members also helped girls to come out of their homes and spend time in engaging in extra-curricular activities in the school and outside their home. This gradually created positive vibes in the mindset of the village elders and others, where they appreciated girls' to attend the collectives' meetings and activities.

3.2 Reflective Tools and Techniques: An Analysis

The mode that was used in transacting the curriculum was participatory and reflective. Here children got opportunity to reflect and draw on their own individual experiences, and evaluate their own situations and circumstances. The tools were designed in keeping the purpose of content and aim of curriculum towards developing leadership skills in children. In this process, girls collected information about their social environment and enquired on the same at individual or in peer group level where they reflected on the communities in which they live. Many of the tools ensured that girls' questioned the existing socialization and practices followed in the schools and families. This was done to differentiate stereotypical assumptions from progressive practices and to come up with their own value system, governed by their rational thinking. This was considered critical to address marginalized status quo.

Children or girls got opportunity to know why they were treated differently or had limited participation and opportunities. And, was this legacy, genetic, imposed, or can be changed or created by ones own self. Through training and onsite support, teachers and mentors used

techniques and tools which were hugely reflective. This further penetrated down with girls getting opportunity to voice their feelings and concern. Experiences show that when children provided opportunity they learn to question, discuss and debate in a rational manner. Some of the Techniques used in transacting the curriculum other than questioning are

- ◆ Dialogue and Debate
 - Between Teacher and Children
 - Between peers- Children and children
- ◆ Role Play- to enable children to understand their situation from position of strength and facilitate change in their behavior through developing questioning, analytical and reflective skills.
- ◆ Drawing and reflection – depicting ground realities as they perceive and observe, group reflection
- ◆ Interviews – interacting with larger communities to build confidence and also gather data about their situation
- ◆ Outdoor visits – Visit to understand functioning of various institutions and also to know what processes are followed
- ◆ Games – reflective and building their organization skills
- ◆ Projects – thematic civic action to engage with larger group at school and community.
- ◆

4. Conclusion

This section will try to analyze the change that are seen in girls after going through curriculum and processes that is reflective, open and participatory. It was widely observed that girls who have gone through the process were more confident in sharing their thoughts with others. They work as a group towards a common goal. Some bigger milestones have been that

- Girls' collectives have been successful in creating their own identity in the village where girls take pride in being part of the collective.
- Girls have realized the strength of collectives. Being motivated they move in groups and enjoys the freedom; they also share their concerns with each other and come up with solution for their problem.
- Girls organize small events without much external support. They critically present issues affecting their own self , family and community. At some level, they have been change agent in finding their own solutions.
- Girls have started questioning and have started being aware and negotiate for their rights. like girls informing and negotiating with parents about their decision to not marry early , to continue education.
- Community members have begun to appreciate the initiatives taken by the girls like plantation and cleanliness drive. Moreover, at many places *Pradhans (head of the village)* and government officials have come forward to support the girls in civic activities.

Changes in lives of girls show that in order for education to become an empowering tool, education needs to engross with lives of the children as well as their surrounding- their poverty, health, society, and livelihood. This is basic premise for an inclusive curriculum, education can never be considered as a minimalistic tool driven towards acquiring numeracy and literacy. When this curriculum engages with girls, their family and community, it enables development of leadership skills in girls and brings in the desired changes in them. Curriculum purposively designed can provide opportunity to broaden the horizon by understanding ones self and extending it to understanding of society.

Another identified principle is that education process needs to be acknowledged as a facilitative process to construct and deconstruct three important layers of an individual - self, family, and society. This process has shown that links between life and society needs to be facilitated through our understanding in our own family. In this context, engagement with family becomes critical as shown by field experiences. Processes were established to engage with family through monthly meeting. The focus was on reflecting with family on certain issues as well as generating knowledge and disseminating them.

Recognising that different people experience life differently as a result of religion, race, culture, gender, age, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity. The curriculum focused on building an understanding, perspective and appreciation of the diversity that exists around and ways to build a consensual understanding and dialogue on issues of diversity.

The curriculum was instrumental in ensuring girls understood the relationship amongst self, family and society, each one dependent on one another and how can change in one layer trigger changes in others. The techniques and tools played a critical role.

The program experiences and anecdotes establish that education needs to be a reflective tool, to accept and to discriminate. To accept knowledge and legacy that the society has given, to discriminate, to question the stereotypical norms which the society imposes. This is the pathway that education can establish as a social change agent to empower communities, more specifically the most marginalized ones.

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