



Empowering Adolescent Girls: Role Of Society

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ARTICLE INFO ABSTRACT

The shift from childhood to maturity causes the adolescent period to be marked by increased confusion, disputes, and pressure. Hormonal fluctuations give rise to autonomous ideologies that encourage risk-taking and cause a person to become confused about what is good and wrong. It's a time when youth seek to deepen their bonds and move past their families and parents. The expectations for the adolescent have changed from early reliance, which included a relative lack of responsibility, to significantly more numerous and difficult tasks. Adolescents must also traditionally adapt to their changing physical, sexual, and intellectual selves as well as to societal expectations of increased independence and self-sufficiency.

It is imperative to identify and address the needs of adolescents in a targeted and inclusive manner, not only in policies and programs but also in planning at all levels. This research article aims to explore the idea of how society might positively channel teenage girls' energies and emotions for their overall growth.

Keywords: Girls in Adolescence, Empowerment, and Society

"Recognizing and involving adolescents will ensure the positive composition of the nation."

Since the Convention on the Rights of the Child came into effect twenty years ago, the international community has committed to defending children's rights to protection, education, health care, and participation. These rights come with ethical and legal requirements. In India, adolescents (10–19 years old) make up half of the population, and young people (10–24 years old) make up the other third. Investing in around 253 million teenagers, or about 21% of India's total population. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are all related to adolescent development either directly or indirectly, requires putting adolescents first. The Committee on the Rights of the Child holds governments worldwide responsible for ensuring the wellbeing of their children. For many people, a joyful childhood filled with chances to play, study, and feel protected is still a long way off. Millions of youngsters, on the other hand, must deal with dangerous jobs, early pregnancies, and involvement in violent combat. Adolescents are vulnerable to abuses of protection because they are burdened with adult responsibilities and denied their rights as minors.

The period of human development known as adolescence, which occurs between childhood and adulthood, is marked by significant changes in the body, mind, and social structure. This tumultuous stage is marked by mood swings, impulsive actions, a blood idea of self-identity, violent behavior, anxiety attacks, and intricate and challenging interpersonal relationships. It's a time of intense change, including mental, emotional, and physical transformations.

Rationale for Investment on Adolescents:

Almost half the world's adolescents of the appropriate age do not attend secondary school. Their right to be knowledgeable, informed and aware left unfulfilled and lacking skills which is incompatible with high-level competencies increasingly required by modern globalized economy. The skill deficit contributes to the youth unemployment. The interventions for the adolescents have been advocated largely on ethical, political, economic and equity grounds. According to a study by UNICEF (2005) following reasons are necessary to invest in adolescent population:

a) Ethical Argument: Social investment as a tool for equalizing opportunities and enforcing laws. In light of the fact that universal human rights—civil, political, economic, social, and cultural—should be essential to any country that strives for fairness and equality for all of its residents, especially children, this argument views social investment as an ethical requirement. A stable democracy, continued economic growth, and increased social cohesiveness all depend on the universality of rights.

b) Economic Argument: On the one hand, "the formulation and application of social policy affects the economy." It is crucial to show that nations lacking a population that is educated and in good health—often the outcome of low levels of social investment—will have significant difficulties incorporating technology and know-how into their industrial processes. Increased productivity makes cost-cutting possible, which lowers prices and boosts competitiveness in international markets.

c) Political Argument: Adolescent social deprivation undermines participation and solidarity, two fundamental principles of democratic life, in addition to undermining democracy's institutional component. Conversely, human development and social investment create solid processes of social integration and open doors for social mobility for larger segments of the population.

d) Equity Grounds: All children are equal and have human rights, including the freedom from abuse, neglect, and exploitation as well as the rights to food, shelter, healthcare, and education. This is stated in the UN Convention on Child Rights. According to the Convention, children have the right to participate in decision-making and their opinions should be given appropriate weight based on their maturity and age. Therefore, it is necessary to view issues pertaining to teenagers from the angles of survival, protection, care, involvement and growth, as well as informed inclusion in society and citizenship.

Objectives:

- ❖ The primary aim of the research is to evaluate the stress levels of teenage girls.
- ❖ Examining the reasons behind teenage girls' stress.
- ❖ Placing a strong emphasis on their optimism and inner strength, which can inspire and propel people toward overall growth even under trying circumstances.

Hypothesis:

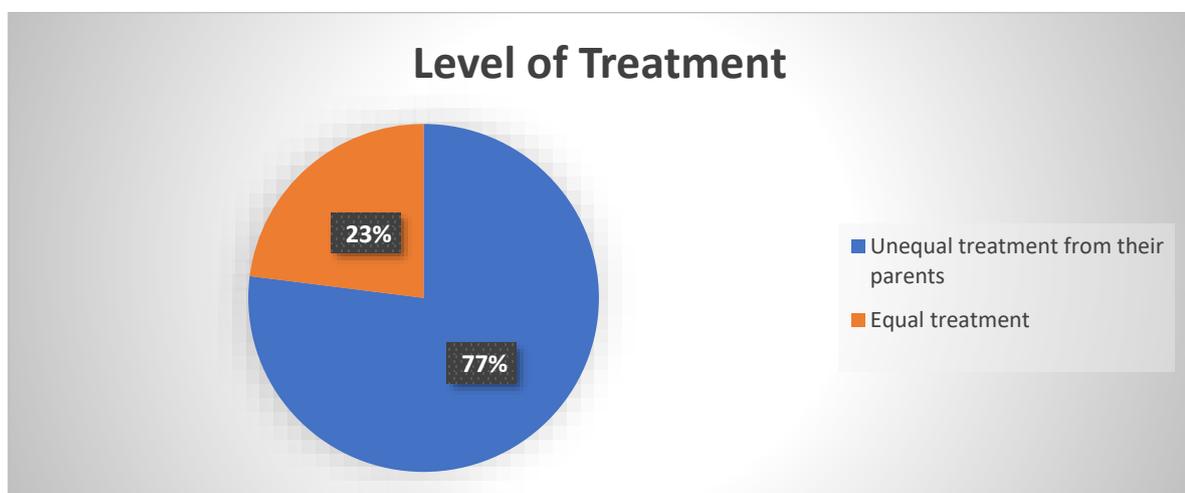
- ❖ One primary cause of psychological imbalance or psychosomatic disorders in them is competition for their performance in school and professional formation.
- ❖ Stress is caused by conflicts between evolving lifestyles and values among adolescent girls.
- ❖ In the event that they have no particular instruction or counseling, negativity and violence are more likely to arise.

Research Methodology :

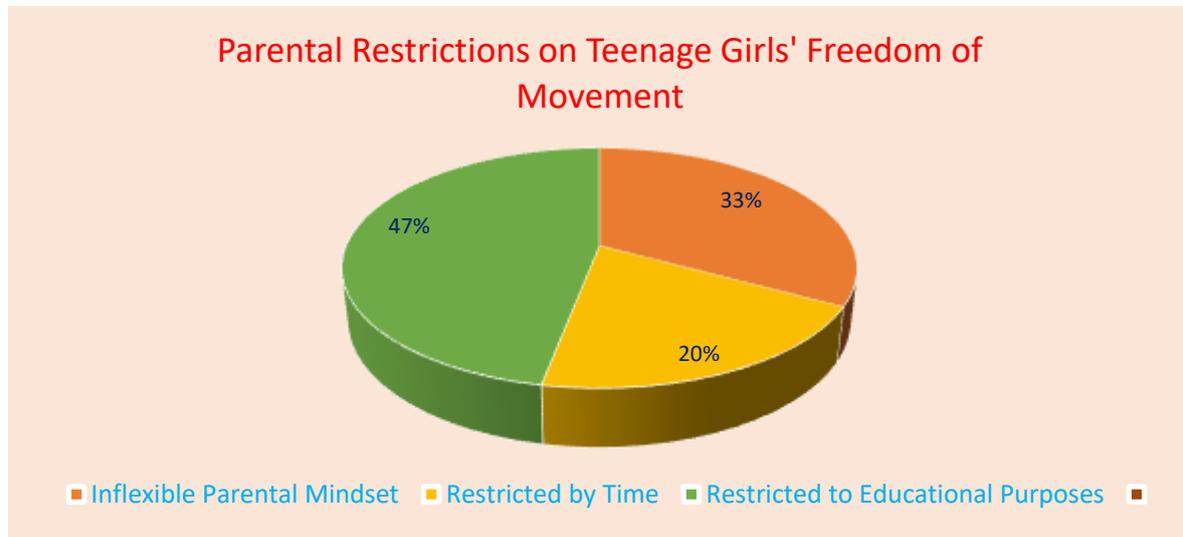
- ❖ **Research design-** Descriptive Research.
- ❖ **Universe and sample-** The people of sector 21, Indira Nagar, Lucknow, U.P. are the universe and 100 adolescent girls (age limit of 14-19 years) belonging middle are purposively selected as sample.
- ❖ **Source of data collection-** Primary, secondary and tertiary.
- ❖ **Tools of data collection-** Interview Schedule.
- ❖ **Techniques of data collection** – Observation and Interview.
- ❖ **Collection, Classification and Analysis of Data** – Through editing, coding and tabulation.

Findings and Discussion:

The Primary data shows that 77% of respondents claimed that they get unequal treatment from their parents. They are required to achieve many domestic tasks in contrast to their brothers. The remaining 23% did not benefit from this; instead, they received the same treatment.



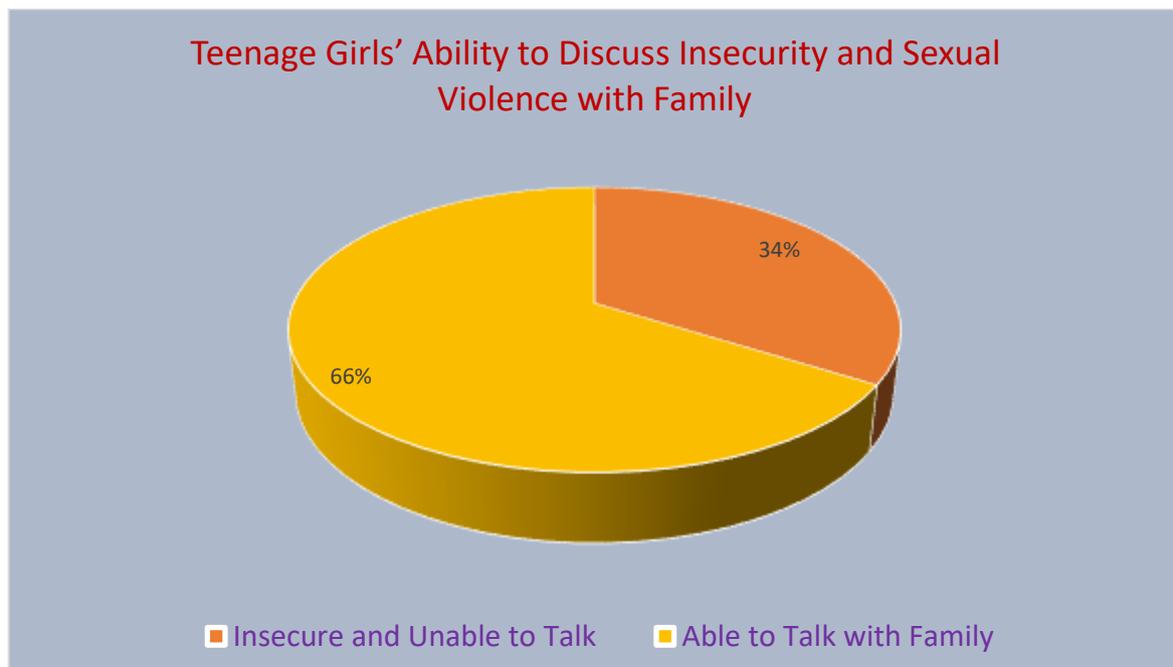
33% of teenage females agreed that their parents' inflexible mindset keeps them cooped up inside their walls and that they are constantly under the control of men. 20% of the girls stated that their parents allow them to go outside, but only during certain hours of the day and not after dark. Adolescent girls stated that 47% of them were only allowed to go outside for school or college, and even then, it was just to purchase books or take notes, among other educational purposes. Thus, a scientific explanation for the socially rigid mindset surrounding their limited physical strength is imposed onto them.



74% of girls were in favour that gender inequality has strong roots due to patriarchal society and it cannot be removed. This rigidity inhibits their potentialities to explore which is a major cause of girls' poor development. Only 26% girls said that time has been changed we don't feel like this type of rigidity.

64% of adolescent girls were in favour that insecurity lies in our mind regarding physical and mental harassment due to eve teasing, molestation and rape etc. While 36% of girls were especially insecure with fast growing 'acid attack cases'.

34% of girls were in favour that sometimes they feel insecure with few relatives and find themselves exposed to sexual violence at their home and even unable to talk with their parents about it while rest 66% were able to talk with their mothers or other family members to talk about it.



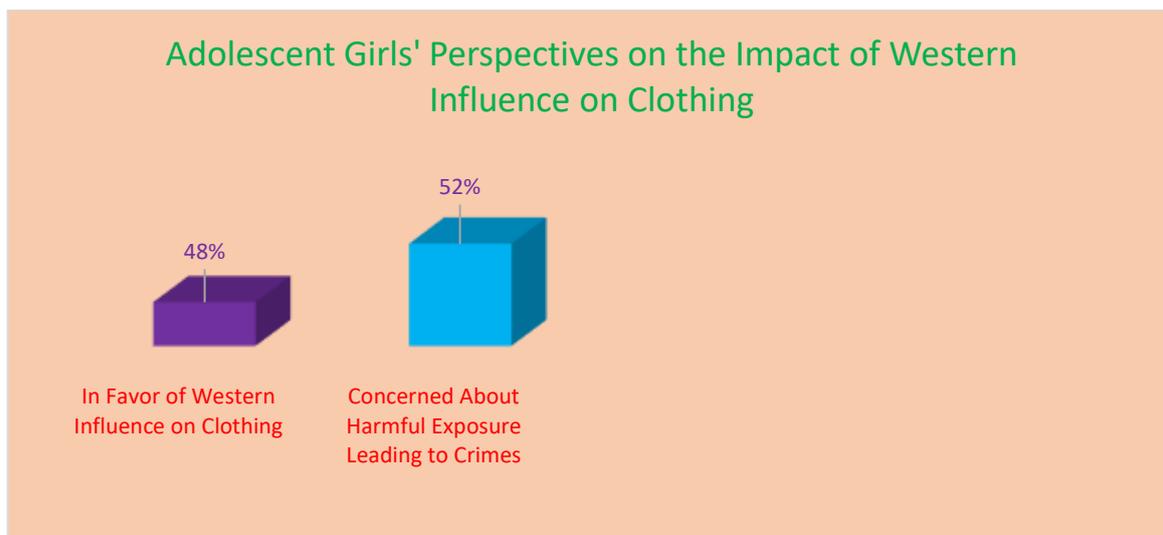
72% girls told child labour as a curse to mankind, because these children are exposed to all kinds of sexual abuses and other physical violence. While rest of the 28% said that this is the only way to survive those children what they can do instead of doing this due to their helplessness.

84% girls were in favour that these all factors are creating hindrances in girls' overall development (physical, mental and social).

39% girls said that they can hold themselves against all negative conditions, at least they can try to bring them out from adverse conditions.

26% girls told these environmental (from society) insecurity sometimes make them very aggressive and non-peaceful which is not a good sign for the society because in future they will hold a family and family is the base of any society.

48% adolescent girls were in favour of the impact of the west and exposure regarding clothes but 52% said that sometimes this exposure can be harmful to disturb others biological, mental soundness and provokes rape, molestation and other kind of crimes etc., because in this way innocents also can be victims so it's important for societal peace to follow the norms and dignity and do everything within limits.



49% of girls said values are shifting towards dark side, everyone is pursuing the path of growth for his/her personal development so why we can't do so everyone has the equal responsibility to hold the social norm and values only females are not solely responsible to bear this responsibility. If they are thinking like this it is an alarming situation, it can be harmful for the peace of society. Rest of the 51% were of the view that females are more sincere and capable to hold the values and norms, it's inherited among them.

Strategies for the Development of Adolescent Girls:

Development strategy heavily relies on the social assistance component of social protection, which plays a major and comprehensive role in eliminating poverty in emerging nations. There is mounting evidence that social protection programs can lessen the risk of abuse and exploitation while simultaneously improving children's health, nutrition, and academic performance in developing nations with the necessary experience.

Addressing separately for their recognition:

Adolescents as a group need to be recognized individually because, when they are combined with other groups, their unique ideologies regarding their physical and psychological changes at that specific time, as well as the ways in which policies and programs are implemented, lose sight of their issues, concerns, problems, and aspirations.

Guidance & Counselling:

Counseling and training centers can provide healthcare services aimed at promoting physical, psychological, and behavioral improvements, as well as health information, particularly on HIV/AIDS and STDs.

Greater Inclusion:

Boys' educational, nutritional, health, livelihood, and empowerment programs must be planned with these distinctions in mind. But caution must be used to prevent perpetuating gender stereotypes while doing so. It is regrettable that government policy and program materials sometimes seem to view females exclusively in terms of their potential roles as wives, mothers, and caregivers when it comes to programs for girls. This has to be fixed. It is ideal for program interventions to involve both boys and girls. There is sufficient data to conclude that engaging with one group at the expense of others does not result in long-term change.

Channelizing their energy towards right direction:

They must focus their efforts and explore their potential in order to become positive role models for future generations of humans. Many school dropouts lack access to chances for skill development that would increase their employability. The Ministry of Labour and Employment's Skill Development Initiative (SDI), a new strategic framework for early school dropouts and current unorganized sector workers, needs to be extended to all of the communities.

Firm and strong values:

Adolescence is a critical time when a person can decide whether to be a constructive or harmful member of society. At that point, their upbringing with relation to a value system needs to be appropriately directed and supervised. Adolescents should be acknowledged as tools for bringing about change in the country's growth, expressing their rights and performing their civic duties. This will require more than just empowering them to combat their own criminality and fundamentalist inclinations.

The establishment of special / rehabilitation centers:

All kinds of school dropouts should have access to the special/rehabilitation centers under the Ministry of Labour's National Child Labour Projects (NCLP) Scheme, which are intended to rescuers from child labor. If they so choose, teenage pupils can be coached in developing two- or three-income-generating schemes based on their potential and encouraged to do so. In order to provide teenagers with the necessary clarifications as they advance, career guidance and counseling services should be integrated into the operations of various labor centers. Students from the vocational stream will be given preference in higher professional degrees, such as engineering and similar programs. As part of the NCLP program, kids in the age group of 9–14-year-olds are pulled from the workforce and placed in NCLP Special Training Centers (STCs), where they receive health care, midday meals, stipends, vocational training, bridging education, and other services before being integrated into the regular school system. Samagara Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Scheme has now absorbed the NCLP Scheme. Based on data from District Project Societies, as of March 31, 2021, 1225 Special Training Centers throughout 59 districts were functioning for the rehabilitation of 33573 enlisted child laborers. Number of districts in the state/UT and number of Special Training Centers (STC) in operation as of March 31, 2021.

Training of related people:

They have emotional swings during the transitional period from adolescence to adulthood, ranging from extreme melancholy to extreme enthusiasm. They don't comprehend the situation or act appropriately. In such a situation, their parents, teachers, and other caregivers ought to be knowledgeable about this specific type of behavior and experienced in handling it. This awareness and assistance can only limit their ability to avoid the negativity that permeates modern life and regulate their social disintegration. Since most mental health disorders start in youth, it is important to treat the difficulties with psychosocial wellbeing, anxiety, depression, substance misuse, and smoking.

In some areas, the SAG program addresses the psychological needs of out-of-school adolescents. Through this program, teenagers receive counseling and guidance on health, nutrition, and education issues in an effort to improve their physical and mental well-being. Since most mental health disorders start in youth, it is important to treat the difficulties with psychosocial wellbeing, anxiety, depression, substance misuse, and smoking. In some areas, the SAG program addresses the psychological needs of out-of-school adolescents. Through this program, teenagers receive counseling and guidance on health, nutrition, and education issues in an effort to improve their physical and mental well-being.

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao

On January 22, 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Beti Bachao Beti Padao (BBBP) at Panipat, Haryana. This program's main goals are to safeguard girls from social issues including gender-based abortions and to advance girl-child education globally. The BBBP is an all-encompassing program in India designed to address the nation's deteriorating Child Sex Ratio (CSR) as well as associated problems with women's empowerment. The Indian Prime Minister launched the nationwide BBBP expansion in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, on March 8, 2018, following the observation of a positive trend in the Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) throughout 161 implementing districts. On it, the Ministries of Human Resource Development, Health and Family Welfare, and Women and Child Development worked together.

CBSE Udaan Scheme

The CBSE Udaan plan for girls is managed and administered by the Central Board of Secondary Education in partnership with the Government of India's Ministry of Human Resource Development. The objective of this program is to enhance the proportion of female students enrolled in esteemed engineering and technical institutes throughout India. The Scheme's Principal Elements are:

- ❖ Free course material and online resources for girls in 11th and 12th grades, such as video instruction.
- ❖ Weekend virtual courses for girls in the 11th and 12th grades

- ❖ Peer education and career opportunities for deserving female students.
- ❖ Study assistance and clarification facilities via a toll-free number
- ❖ Consistent monitoring and tracking of students' progress.

Balika Samridhhi Yojana

A scholarship programme called the Balika Samridhhi Yojana offers financial assistance to underprivileged adolescent girls and their families. Raising girls' social status, advancing their marriageable age, and increasing enrolment in school are the main goals of the program. Both rural and urban regions can participate in this female child benefit program. A financial prize is offered to all eligible beneficiaries once a girl child is born. A girl child will thereafter get an annual scholarship worth between Rs. 300 and Rs. 1000 while she is still enrolled in school. Until she becomes eighteen, the daughter will withdraw the remaining funds from the plan.

Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana (Small Deposit Scheme for the Girl Child)

One of the main reasons why girls face sexism is because of the dower and other expenses related to marriage. Parents of girl children can participate in the government-sponsored Sukanya Samridhhi Yojna (Women Child Prosperity Account) savings program. The initiative assists parents in saving money for the future marriage and college costs of their female kid. Under this scheme, 1.26 crore accounts have been opened to date, worth a total of roughly 20,000 crores. In less than three years, this plan has become a huge hit.

Ladli Scheme and the Kanya Kosh Scheme

Haryana has the worst birth-to-sex ratio in India in 2011 (834 females for every 1000 persons). The state administration changed the situation on the ground by taking a number of actions. They started the Ladli plan, which gives all parents whose second girl child is born on or after August 20, 2005, a cash prize of Rs. 5000/- per year for a maximum of five years, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, wages, or the number of sons. The "Kanya Kosh" project, introduced in 2015 by the Haryana government led by Manohar Lal Khattar, proved to be a great success. This system now encompasses the first sibling as part of its enlarged scope. Upon the birth of the first girl child, a sum of Rs 21,000 will be placed. The remaining amount would increase to Rs one lakh once the girl turns eighteen. The girl child must be born on August 30, 2005, or later.

National Scheme of Incentive for the Girls of Secondary Education

A nationwide initiative to encourage females to pursue secondary school is run by the Human Resource Development Ministry of the Government of India's Department of School & Literacy. The main goal of the program is to assist girls from India's underprivileged classes and provide them with the means to finish their secondary education. Under the initiative, a worthy girl would receive Rs. 3,000 as a fixed deposit, which she can take with interest after she turns 18 and passes her tenth-grade exam. The young girl has to be

- ❖ Unmarried
- ❖ Below the age of 16
- ❖ The candidate should have passed the 8th grade and enrolled in the 9th
- ❖ Must be enrolled in a govt aided school

Ladli Laxmi Yojana of Madhya Pradesh

The "Ladli Laxmi Yojana" of the Madhya Pradesh state government intends to enhance the health and educational standing of girls in the region. It seeks to prevent juvenile marriages and foster positive attitudes on girls' puberty in order to discourage female foeticide. Once the beneficiary is chosen and approved, they are given five years' worth of continuous National Savings Certificates worth Rs. 6000/-.

Karnataka Bhagyashree Scheme

The Bhagyashree Scheme of the Karnataka government promotes girl births in low-income households. The Karnataka government provides health care coverage up to Rs. 25,000 annually and an annual scholarship between Rs. 300 and Rs. 1000 up to class ten to financially assist girls.

Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree Scheme from the Government of Maharashtra

A government initiative in Maharashtra called Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree aims to better the lives of girls from low-income families and other underprivileged groups. Under the scheme, a mother of a girl child receives Rs. 5,000 year for the first five years after the child is born. After then, before the child is enrolled in the fifth grade, her family receives financial aid totalling Rs. 2,500 each year.

Chief Minister's Girl Child Protection Scheme of Tamil Nadu

The Chief Minister's Girl Child Protection Scheme in Tamil Nadu seeks to eradicate gender inequity by giving girl children more rights and empowering them through direct government funding. If the household only has one girl child, and the kid is born on or after August 1, 2011, a fixed deposit of Rs. 50,000 is made in her name with Tamil Nadu Power Finance and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited. A twenty-five thousand dollar fixed deposit is made in each of the daughters' names if the family only has two daughters. The girl kid

starts receiving an annual incentive of Rs. 1800 after the sixth year of deposit to help with the cost of her education.

SAG Scheme

The program's main goal is to improve the social and economic standing of teenage girls between the ages of 11 and 14 while also providing sustenance for them. The goal is to educate and empower teenage girls so they can become independent and conscious citizens of their country.

The following are the declared goals:

1. Enable the Adolescent Girls for self-development and empowerment.
2. Improve the nutrition and health status of Adolescent Girls.
3. Promote awareness of health, nutrition and hygiene.
4. Support out of school Adolescent Girls to successfully transition back to formal schooling or bridge learning/skill training.
5. Upgrade their home-based skills and life skills.
6. Provide information/guidance about existing public services such as Primary Health Centres, Rural Hospitals/CHCs, the Post Office, the Bank, the Police Station, etc.

SAG Scheme Services Provided

Under the scheme, the beneficiaries receive the following services, which are divided into nutrition and non-nutrition components.

Nutrition provision:

Supplementary nutrition comparable to that given to expectant mothers and nursing mothers under ICDS, comprising 600 calories, 18–20 grams of protein, and micronutrients, would be given to each out-of-school registered beneficiary for 300 days out of the year. You would receive this nutrition in the form of hot cooked meals or take-home rations.

Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation:

In addition to IFA tablets, the Adolescent Girls would receive information on dietary diversification, food fortification, and the benefits of IFA tablet supplementation in the fight against iron deficiency anemia.

Health check-up and Referral services:

General health check-up of all Adolescent Girls at least once in three months.

Nutrition & Health Education (NHE):

Long-term access to health and nutrition knowledge will improve the recipients' and their families' overall health and break the harmful cycle of malnutrition that persists across generations. Together with health officials, resource people, and field trainers from NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs), the ICDS provides this in the AWC. The information provided covers topics such as controlling menarche, maintaining excellent sanitation, safe drinking water practices, healthy eating and cooking habits, supporting healthy traditional practices while busting myths, and personal cleanliness.

Mainstreaming out-of-school girls to join formal schooling, bridge course/skill training:

Under this, adolescent girls who are not enrolled in school are recognized and given assistance to return to or enroll in regular education. Information about the advantages of a formal education is given to families. Girls are encouraged to aspire to these female role models by highlighting them under this.

Life Skill Education, home management, etc.:

In order to prepare recipients to contribute positively to society as adults, they are given advice on gender sensitivity, home management (maintenance, budgeting, saving, running the family, etc.) and life skills.

Counseling/Guidance on accessing public services:

In cooperation with PRI members, NGOs/CBOs, police officers, bank officials, post office officials, health workers, school authorities, etc., awareness talks and visits are planned.

Kishori Health Card

The states keep the Kishori Health Cards in the Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) to document the height, weight, and body mass index (BMI) of the teenage girls in addition to other services rendered under the SAG system. The card also contains information about the results or accomplishments under the plan.

Kishori Diwas:

Every three months, a unique day called "Kishori Diwas" is celebrated. This would normally be the day that the girls' general health examination would take place. The community, parents, etc. would receive information education and communication (IEC) on this day.

Scheme for Adolescent Girls Need

A person's adolescence is a critical time in their lives, especially for women. A girl goes through a number of mental and physical changes at this time, and timely interventions can support the development of healthy attitudes toward health and wellbeing in the person. A girl's ability to grow and develop to the fullest can be impeded by a diet deficient in nutrients and a lack of hygienic and healthy habits. The SAG was intended to serve this purpose.

Conclusion:

Although they currently make up 18% of the global population, adolescents are given significantly less attention than their numbers would indicate on the international scene. Adolescent growth must be protected and promoted by parents, families, and local communities. Understanding what teenagers demand from us can only be achieved by listening to them. This phase of development is crucial for an individual. Let's focus on the unique requirements and worries that teenagers have. Let's provide them with chances to engage with society. Let's give them the freedom and chance to grow up to be healthy adults. As the Sustainable Development Goals deadline of 2024 approaches, every effort needs to be put in place to guarantee the equal well-being of children everywhere. They still have a great deal of hope and dreams. It is our responsibility to help teenagers realize their greatest potential. Together, let's collaborate with them to turn life into an exciting journey.

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