

Enhancing Adolescent Participation in SABLA Programme

Gujarat

Submitted by

UNICEF & State Resource Centre for Women (SRCW Gujarat)

Gender Resource Centre (GRC)

Table of contents

1. Introduction

- i. Objective
- ii. Proposed Programme Module
- iii. Expected Outcomes

2. Executive Summary

3. Methodology

4. Desk Review Report

5. Group Discussion Guidelines

6. Profile of participants

7. District Reports: key points of discussions

- i. Navsari
- ii. Kutch
- iii. Narmada
- iv. Ahmedabad

8. Key observations /highlights from district discussions

Introduction

Gujarat, one of the fastest growing states with high economic growth, contrastingly exhibits marked disparities in social indicators. As per Human Development Report 2011, 69.7% of children upto 5 years of age are anemic and 44.6% are malnourished. As per NFHS 3 [2005-06], 39% of women aged 20 to 24 years were married before 18 years, and 55% of ever married women (15-49 years) were anemic and 32.3% of women (15 - 49 years) have body mass index below normal.

These recent evidences throw light on the need for further improvement on the nutritional status of Adolescent girls in the state minimizing the risks related to pregnancy which would lead to reduced maternal mortality and infant mortality. The government is currently implementing SABLA scheme as a pilot in selected 9 districts. The scheme aims at adolescent girls in the age group of 11 to 18 years under all ICDS projects in selected 9 districts in Gujarat to enable self-development and empowerment of the adolescent girls, improve their nutrition and health status, spread awareness about health, hygiene, nutrition.

UNICEF, as part of its global commitment, has been supporting the Government programmes and one of the key focuses of its 2013-2017 country programmes is to advance the rights of children and adolescents to participate by reducing inequities and providing opportunities for them to express their views they consider as important. UNICEF is committed to ensure that adolescents participate actively in every sphere of life and are empowered to make informed decisions.

As part of its advocacy initiative to promote adolescent participation, UNICEF aims to understand the scope of participation in the existing government flagship programmes like SABLA in the state of Gujarat. This understanding would provide us with strategic inputs for strengthening adolescent participation leading to opportunities for every adolescent to be better informed of their rights, express their views and influence decisions which affect their lives. As part of this endeavor, UNICEF Gujarat proposes to organize a state level workshop, in partnership with Department of Women & Child Development.

Objective:

1. To identify gaps and barriers to adolescent participation in SABLA programme
2. To understand the kind and extent of programmatic inputs required to enhance participation
3. To share good examples from four SABLA districts: Ahmedabad, Narmada, Navsari and Kutch

Proposed Programme Module:

The workshop will be held at two levels: at district level followed by the state level event:

1. District level – Separate focus group discussions with adolescent girls, Anganwadi workers and Anganwadi supervisors from select villages will be conducted in Ahmedabad, Narmada and Kutch districts. The discussion would focus on the key challenges to participation, learnings, good examples, stories of change, etc. The key findings from these FGDs will be shared during the state level event.

2. State Level- Select adolescent girls, Anganwadi workers, Anganwadi supervisors will be participating at a state level event and sharing their experiences of being part of the SABLA programme. The focus of this dissemination will be stories of change, good practices and key challenges. This discussion will help us understand the community and programmatic gaps and barriers to adolescent participation within the SABLA scheme.

The state level event will be followed by draft state guidelines highlighting the components of participation in SABLA programme, which will be shared with the Department of Women & Child Welfare for their endorsement.

Expected Outcomes

1. Adolescents will be able to voice their issues and concerns to the stakeholders regarding their participation in SABLA scheme.
2. Programme managers will understand the issues related to adolescent participation and identify gaps and barriers.
3. Key stakeholders will identify the scope of adolescent participation and develop action points to develop a guideline for enhancing participation

2. Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNICEF, in partnership with the Department of Women and Child Development, initiated the review of SABLA programme to understand the scope of adolescent participation in the existing programme. The objective was to identify the existing structures of the adolescent participation platforms, the current scope of participation within the programme and the possible entry points to enhance adolescent participation. Four FGDs were conducted with each adolescent girls, Anganwadi Workers and Anganwadi Supervisors group across four districts (Navsari, Ahmedabad, Kutchh and Narmada).

ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Focus group discussions were conducted with adolescent girls with the average age of 16.5 years in Navsari followed by 15.5 years in Ahmedabad and Narmada and 18 years in Kutchh. Majority of the participants across the districts are have completed primary education and have dropped out of school while in Navsari, most of the girls are currently studying and expressed their desire to continue studying till college. Across other districts, most of the school dropout girls are currently engaged in vocational courses such as computers, beautician, tailoring, mehndi, and handicraft or in household or as agricultural labourer, embedding stones, animal husbandry, working in GIDC, sewing dresses and blouse to earn livelihood. Most of the girls considered education to be very important as it would make them independent, help them earn money through jobs, consequently they would be able to contribute in household expenses and buy things for self. The primary reasons for dropping out of school were no facility of school in the village, household responsibilities, poor financial condition, no transport, mother not well, not interested etc.

Most of the girls participated in different co-curricular activities and competitions in school particularly in activities like 'mehndi' & 'rangoli' competition, elocution competition, patriotic song singing competition, drawing competition, sport, and science fair, etc. They mentioned that participation helped in boosting their confidence, helped in physical and mental development, learning new things, learning about their peers from other places and it also refreshed their minds. However they also mentioned the non-existence of any such platform where they can voice their issues or discuss them. During their free time the girls reported to watch TV at home, help their mothers in the household chores, visit their friends or visit the AWC in their village. Girls are allowed to go out alone to meet their friends, visit the AWC and also go out of their villages to study as the school in the village was only up till class VIII. However they mentioned that they are also accompanied by their mother, brothers or some guardian if it is late in night.

The participants were aware about the issues with menstruation and the changes that occur during adolescence and the primary source of information were their mothers, sisters and the AWW. They were comfortable discussing these issues with their mothers and the AWW. For health problems related to menstruation such as abdominal pain, or any other problem, girls reported approaching the AWW who in turn referred them to the ANM. However they are not aware of any adolescent friendly

clinic and have never visited one. All the girls reported to being satisfied with the AWW and ANM's services.

The participants were well informed about the activities of the AWC as they visit the centre and they participated in celebrations such as Nutrition week, Independence/Republic day, rallies, Mamta din, etc. However, the girls are not aware about SABLA programme and are not very regular in attending SABLA meetings. They mentioned that they primarily follow what the AWW proposes and supports her in conducting the activity. They never decided the activities rather proposes during meetings and have never given any feedback to the AWW on the quality of the activities conducted or their need or the changes that they want in the AWC.

The girls suggested that it would be helpful to conduct meetings with the mothers so that they are aware about the kind of information provided in the AWC and would cooperate at home. Since of the girls visit the AWC only once in a month, they proposed to have the activities twice in a month. To ensure participation of both younger as well as older girls who are either working or studying, the meeting should be organised on holiday or Sunday.

There was absence of feedback mechanism as they never gave feedback on any of the issues to the AWC or to any other service provider. However, they reported that they could inform the AWW regarding what they wanted to learn or know more about. Very few participants were aware about the sakhi and saheli groups and their responsibilities. The participants suggested that it would be helpful to conduct meetings with the parents particularly mothers so that they are aware of the adolescent focussed activities at the AWC and the objective of the same. This would reduce the resistance from the parents towards participating in the AWC activities.

They also suggested organising vocational training courses on mehndi, tailoring, embroidery, computer, beauty parlour, English class with an established linkage to the market which would help them to earn, contribute to household income and become self reliant and empowered. Along with vocational skills, they would like to know about different government schemes for adolescent girls and on savings schemes. They proposed a regular visit from outside agencies/ external people like the team to discuss with them about the existing problems and the solution. Exposure visits/learning visits to other places with AWW would help them to learn from others. They suggested use of charts, posters, films as a medium of providing information which is easily understandable. They also proposed for a cleaner AWC, organize film shows, to have interacting learning tools, books, computer, TV, as they were keen to learn new things, and gather updated information on issues other than health. They also felt that AWW should give more time to the adolescents and to the SABLA programme.

ANGANWADI WORKERS

AWWs mentioned that through regular home visits they conduct the survey and attendance register of both school going and out of school girls. However, they raised the concern despite identifying 30 to 35 adolescents approximately in a centre, only 30 to 40% attends the SABLA programme as the girls are either school going or are engaged as daily wage earners, agricultural labourers, household chores etc. They mentioned about different communities where most of the parents are illiterate and they don't understand the importance of sending the girls to the AWC and hence it is very difficult to include the girls from that community.

The participants mentioned that most of the adolescent girls visit the Anganwadi Centre (AWC) on a selected day as they get nutritious food packets on that day or during a meeting where information on various topics such as nutrition, changes during adolescence, menstruation, nutritious recipe making, etc. are provided. Some of the adolescent's girls also participate in "Mamta Divas", celebration of all festivals and Independence Day/Republic Day, rallies, etc. AWWs have organised exposure visits to police station, dairy, bank, post office for the girls. Mamta Taruni divas, is celebrated once in every quarter when the girls are weighed, Hb and BMI tests are done in collaboration with the ANM. However, they raised the concern about limited budget which restricts them from organising activities for the adolescents. As per the SABLA guideline, there are limited budgetary provisions for providing nutritious food, for conducting exposure visits and the AWW has to contribute to conduct the activities.

AWWs reported about formation of Sakhi - Saheli, i.e. Kishori Samoohs and these groups primarily meet those girls who are irregular in attending program. However, there was a lack of clarity about the process of formation of the Samoohas and the role of Sakhi and Sahelis.

During the initiation of the programme, some of the AWWs received single training on SABLA; hence there is a need to have refresher training on complete SABLA module. They expressed the need for training on program implementation, record management, interactive and thematic activity planning and communication skills with adolescents. They need training on counselling so that they can counsel the adolescents and their parents about the importance of SABLA. The emphasis was on the need of training which would build their capacity in increasing the participation of the adolescents in the programme. They identified the need for the availability of the IEC materials (poster, books and audio visual medium) on adolescents to make their interaction easy and effective. AWWs mentioned that the adolescent's girls are very friendly with them and they share their problems with the AWWs but when there is a meeting on SABLA, their participation is less as they are not interested in only receiving information.

Need for an increased budget allocation was mentioned and to have particular provisions of providing snacks/refreshments, travel support, stipend to adolescent girls during weekly meetings. Need for support to initiate vocational training programs for adolescents at the Centre such as tailoring,

beautician, computers, etc was mentioned. AWWs suggested the provision for inviting resource persons/speakers for meeting to talk to the adolescent girls on different issues as per the need of the group e.g. career counselling, health, nutrition, etc which would increase their participation.

AWWs mentioned that SABLA programme is very effective and important but because of work load resulting to time constraint, they are not able to put focus on the activities of the programme and listen to all the issues that the girls bring up. They suggested conducting SABLA related activities on one particular day in the week which would be entirely for adolescent and will be thematic in nature. AWWs mentioned that the salary of the AWW needs to be reviewed keeping the workload and timings of the AWC in mind. They mentioned that they are not able to focus on the SABLA programme with the over demanding workload and limited availability of help.

ANGANWADI SUPERVISORS

Most the supervisors are responsible to manage 20-25 AWCs, few are responsible for 45 AWCs which hinders the regular visit to the AWCs. They identify AWCs based on the parameters like poor record maintenance, not maintaining timely operation of the AWC, interior AWCs and AWCs with lesser attendance rate. Supervisors get involved in the launch of new programmes, or they have to participate in any training and other programme (health camps, Immunisation week, Krushi rath, election) then they are not able to conduct AWC visit. They mentioned that due to all these engagements their workload has 75% of the external work and only 25% of work is related to ICDS including SABLA. They have to ensure that they monitor the following activities for all the AWCs like cleanliness of the AWC, check the menu, attendance of children, check the registers, follow up on malnourished children, checking the quality of the food prepared in the AWC, conduct adolescent survey every three months, monitor the household visits, participate in meetings. Few supervisors mentioned that at time they face language problems and access to interior villages is difficult.

They have received the SABLA training but there is a need for a refresher for them and the AWW. However, they felt the methodology of training should be changed and the trainings should be conducted in an interactive way. They accepted that although sakhi –saheli was formed but they did not function as desired and they were not given any training. According to the supervisors, the sakhi-saheli groups are difficult to maintain as they are not very active because of time constraint. Also, not many girls were willing to become leaders. Further, they were out of the program as they turn 19 so again new leader needs to be appointed. Thus, several operational difficulties are faced by the sakhi-saheli groups. They suggested that there should be workshops/meetings with the parents of the girls to ensure participation and they should also be involved in activity planning.

The participants suggest that the supervisors should conduct supervision on rotational level. There are certain interior villages where the customs are very orthodox and involvement from girls and women are minimal. In these communities, the girls are not allowed to study and women are not allowed to participate in any activities other than household chores and hence it is very difficult for

involving the adolescent. Any ICDS programme related activities should be conducted at village level at a convenient time so that the adolescents can participate and the community can be involved. It is important to involve the gram panchayat in all the activities so that there is not budget constraint and social problem in the village. There should be participation from VHSC, school, ASHA, AWW, MO/ANM in gram sabha meetings so that the community can discuss the relevant issues.

Adolescents should be taken for exposure visits which would include visit to historical places and other relevant places and provide necessary budget for the activities. The activities should be developed only after discussion with adolescents. Since, there are a significant number of NRIs from that area, the supervisor mobilises resources through the Sarpanch and uses the fund for the activities related to the AWC.

Supervisors mentioned that the salary needs to be reviewed keeping the workload and timings in mind and provide vehicle to travel to interior villages.

3. Methodology

A two pronged methodology was followed for this activity and the first step was to review the SABLA implementation guideline in context of the policy framework based on some parameters.

Below mentioned are the parameters which were considered for the desk review of the SABLA implementation guidelines:

- In the guideline, if there is implementation component to create structures/platforms for adolescent participation is present or not
- Design and implementation plan mentioned for the structure /platform mentioned in the guideline
- Budgetary allocation to enhance adolescent participation in the SABLA programme
- At what levels the adolescent participation structures both formal and informal are present (community, block, district, state)
- Adolescent participation if promoted in skill development/knowledge increase, decision making process and performance monitoring.
- Existing opportunity to participate, access, utility and feedback mechanism.

The second part of the methodology was to conduct workshops at two levels: at district level followed by the state level event:

1. District level – Separate focus group discussions with adolescent girls, Anganwadi workers and Anganwadi supervisors from select villages were conducted in Ahmedabad, Narmada and Kutch districts. The FGD guidelines were prepared based on the desk review findings and the discussions focused on the key challenges to participation, learnings, good examples, stories of change, etc.

2. State Level- Select adolescent girls, Anganwadi workers, Anganwadi supervisors will participate at a state level event and sharing their experiences of being part of the SABLA programme. The focus of this dissemination will be stories of change, good practices and key challenges and the discussion will help us to understand the community and programmatic gaps and barriers to adolescent participation within the SABLA scheme.

4. Desk Review Report

Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls or SABLA:

Gujarat government is currently implementing Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls or SABLA scheme¹ as a pilot in selected 9 districts of the state. SABLA, meaning the abled one or the empowered one, aims at adolescent girls in the age group of 11 to 18 years under all ICDS projects in selected districts in Gujarat. The objective is to enable self-development and empowerment of the adolescent girls, improve their nutrition and health status, spread awareness about health, hygiene, nutrition, Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH), and family and child care, upgrade their home-based skills, life skills and vocational skills, mainstream out-of-school adolescent girls into formal/non formal-education; and inform and guide them about existing public services, such as PHC, CHC, Post Office, Bank, Police Station, etc.

This scheme focuses on all out-of-school and school going adolescent girls, who would assemble at the Anganwadi Centre (AWC) at least twice a month and interact amongst themselves. These interactions will provide an opportunity of knowledge sharing, motivating the out of school girls to join back school.

Existing participation platforms:

The primary objective of this review is to understand the existing platforms for participation and to identify the scope of the participation within the programme. The existing platforms in SABLA programme is identified below:

a) Formation of Kishori Samooh (KS): Under the SABLA scheme, 'Kishori Samooh' has to be formed which is a group of average 15 to 25 out of school adolescent girls from the village/area of the Anganwadi centre. This group acts as a platform for the out of school adolescent girls to come together, interact, learn, participate and develop their skills through trainings. This group will select three leaders of their choice to be referred as Sakhi (one girl) as peer monitor and Sahelis (two girls). Each Kishori Samooh is headed by Sakhi, assisted by two Sahelis and they serve the group for a period of one year, after which a fresh selection is made. The Sakhi and Sahelis are trained to serve as peer-monitors and they participate in regular activities of AWC, like providing pre-school education and supplementary nutrition, growth monitoring, etc and also accompany the AWW for home visits. They are trained on health, nutrition, social and legal issues and to conduct activities in an interesting and interactive manner with the adolescent girls.

Formation of Kishori Samooh provides the platform for the out of school going adolescent girls to interact, participate and develop their leadership abilities, team spirit, contribute in empowerment of the other adolescent girls by providing information and guidance to peers. They act as active

¹ The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, in the year 2000, launched a scheme, *Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY)*, which was implemented using the infrastructure of the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS). Later, the Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG) was initiated as a pilot project in the year 2002-03 in 51 identified districts across the country to address the problem of under-nutrition among AGs. In 2009, both these schemes were merged and launched as comprehensive scheme, called Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls or *Sabla*.

members of the village, who would interact with other adolescent girls of the community, service providers, ensure service delivery and voice the needs of the girls.

b) Celebration of Kishori Diwas: Another existing platform is celebration of Kishori diwas which is celebrated once in three months on a fixed day, when adolescent girls are mobilized to assemble at the AWC. This provides an opportunity for the adolescent girls and their families to participate and interact with service providers (ICDS and health personnel) to obtain basic services and information. The service providers will be responsible for educating adolescent girls and their families about the preventive and promotive aspects of nutrition and healthcare, for encouraging them to adopt healthy behaviour as well as seeking healthcare from proper healthcare facilities. This again provides a platform for the adolescent girls to participate, interact and voice their need to the service providers.

c) Mixed group interaction sessions: There is planned interaction sessions for school going and out of school adolescent girls which are held at least twice every month. Though interactive activities like stories, games, group discussions, out of school girls are motivated to join mainstream education, like their peers. These sessions are designed to enhance life skills, understand public services, gather knowledge and develop decision making capacity.

d) Skill development training sessions: Through Skill Development Initiative Scheme (SDIS) the effort is made to provide employable skills to out of school girls through a flexible delivery mechanism, counseling and vocational guidance, and training is provided to create an enabling environment for informed and skilled adolescent girls to seek appropriate livelihood options. These training sessions encourages the adolescent girls to participate, receive training and be better equipped to find appropriate livelihood options for them.

e) Monitoring mechanism at village level: Monitoring and supervision plays a vital role in the success of the scheme and for this scheme, the Monitoring and Supervision Committees are formed at National, State, District, Block and Village level. However, it is only at the village level that Sakhi represents the Kishori Samooh and is a member of the monitoring committee. Participation in the supervision committee at the village level provides the opportunity to monitor the quality of the scheme.

Budget allocation for participation:

The total annual budget allocated for the non nutrition component for each ICDS project is Rs 3,80,000 and Rs 30,000 is allocated towards expenditure on celebrating Kishori Diwas.

Analysis of the existing participation platforms:

The scheme focuses on providing knowledge and services through participation and regular interaction amongst the adolescent girls. The delivery of the services is designed based on a platform which provides opportunity and encourages for participation of the adolescent girls at village level. With the formation of Kishori Samooh and celebration of Kishori diwas, the emphasis is to include as many adolescent girls, provide them the opportunity to participate, build their capacities through trainings and capacity building sessions. However these participation opportunities are available only to the sessions and interactions at the village level. There is a need to create platforms at block, district or at the state level where the adolescents can participate and voice their thoughts, their needs. The quality and the relevance of the training imparted to the adolescent girls needs to be reviewed which can happen through participation of the adolescents. The monitoring framework can be strengthened by creating avenues for participation of the adolescent girls/sakhis/sahelis at block, district level and state level where they can discuss the community level challenges, share knowledge and information and develop action points. This would strengthen the feedback mechanism and also with increased participation and interaction, the adolescent girls will be empowered to voice their needs.

5. Group Discussion Guidelines

DISCUSSION GUIDELINE FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Consent to Participate in Focus Group Discussion

We are here today to discuss with you about certain issues related to adolescents, understand your thoughts and perceptions, your aspirations, your likings and disliking, challenges that you face in your everyday life and the support that you receive. The information learned in the focus groups will be used to design policies to improve quality of life of adolescents. You can choose whether or not to participate in the focus group and stop at any time. Although the focus group will be tape recorded, your responses will remain anonymous and no names will be mentioned in the report. There is no right or wrong answers to the focus group questions. We want to hear many different viewpoints and would like to hear from everyone. We hope you can be honest even when your responses may not be in agreement with the rest of the group. In respect for each other, we ask that only one individual speak at a time in the group and that responses made by all participants be kept confidential. I understand this information and agree to participate fully under the conditions

Stated above:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

- Location of the community (Note down the name)
 - 1.1) District
 - 1.2) Panchayat
 - 1.3) Block
 - 1.4) Village

Namaste. My name is _____ and I am here today to discuss with you about your thoughts and perceptions, your aspirations, your likings and disliking, challenges that you face in your everyday life and the support that you receive. We would like to know about your village and the community, the services that are available here and your opinion about the services as an individual and also as a community member and finally about your contribution and participation in improving the quality of services. Please understand that there is no right or wrong answer and what is important is your views and opinion. This discussion will take around 1 – 1.5 hrs and your names will not be reflected in any of the reports.

- **Please introduce yourself and let us know about the following:**
 - Age
 - Caste
 - Educational level
 - Marital Status
 - Current occupation (if any)

- **Educational Scenario in the village.**
 - Linking with the current educational information provided by the group....
 - Is there a school in the village? Till what level?
 - Upto what class normally girls and boys study in your village? (**Probe:** Reasons for early drop out such as distance from home to school, time required, mode of transport, infrastructure at school, safety, gender disparities, early marriage, etc.)
 - How do you feel about the value/importance of your education? If girls want to study further, are they allowed to do so in your community? Who decides about her future? Does she have a say? Can she negotiate with the decision maker? (Probe for anecdotes)
 - Besides education what other platform is provided in the school? (Probe for activities related to school management committee, sport, art, elocution, competitions, celebration of events such as Republic Day, Independence Day, health check-up camps, etc). What is the level of participation in these activities by the young girls? According to you, how important such opportunities are and how do they impact you?

- **Mobility**
 - After school what do you do in your free time? Are there any recreational options available in the village for young girls?? (sports, training courses, etc.)
 - Do the young girls freely move around in the village alone/in groups (i.e. without adult company)? Who usually accompanies the girls? Who is considered safe? List all the places in the village where it is ok for young girls to go alone (without adult company).

- **Adolescent changes**
 - All of you belong to the age group of 13, 14, 15...(refer to/recall the actual age of the group). So, we presume that you are all menstruating (use local term) and if not then you are aware of... When did you first come to know about menstruation? Who informed you about it?
 - Like menstruation, there are several other changes that take place during adolescence, are you aware of it? (Elaborate). How did you come to know about it? (Probe for: peers, print medium, TV, school, AWW, ANM, mother, relatives, any other source..)
 - There are so many changes taking place in mind and body at your age...What if there are problems (menstrual problems such as pain, heavy or scanty bleeding, etc. or any other problems) that a young girl faces pertaining to these changes? Or has any questions? What does she do? Whom does she approach?
 - What kind of response do they get? Are they satisfied with the response that they are given? (Probe for experiences)
 - If you were not satisfied did you write about it or did you mentioned about it to any service provider? Do you think it is important to provide feedback? Whom would you like to provide feedback to? and then would you also like to monitor what changes has happened after that?

- **Anganwadi centre in the Village and SABLA**
 - Is there an AWC in your village? What do you know about the AWC? (Probe for awareness on activities undertaken at the centre)
 - How many of you and other young girls from the village visited the centre last month? Who invited you to visit and what was the purpose of your visit?
 - Please narrate as to what you did there during your visit. (Probe for their participation in activities/discussions. Also probe whether any information pertaining to RSH was provided to them, any aids used such as charts, etc.) What all services are provided through the AWC? Do you think the services are sufficient?? If not have you ever discussed about your need to the service providers? Why not? Would you like to discuss? Then what will you discuss?
 - Suppose you are chosen as the spokesperson for the girls group, then what all issues you would like to raise? And what all changes you would like to bring in the programme.
 - What information and services was provided to you in the AWC? Did they provide you information on the services available (health, reproductive health, sexual health)? Was that enough or do you think you need more information. Do you know whom to approach if you need any information or in case of any problems?
 - Were you satisfied with the information provided to you about services at AWC? (Probe about their comfort level with the provider, was there room for discussion and open questioning, privacy of the adolescents was maintained?) Did you ask any questions to the AWC? Did you receive any answer? Was it satisfactory?
 - If need arises in future, would you be comfortable to approach the AWC for any information pertaining to general health, reproductive health, sexual health or for any other information? Or you prefer any alternative arrangement. Suggest. (please specify and elaborate).
- **“Adolescent need-specific” health clinics**
 - Are you aware of any clinic/facility which focuses on adolescent health? Have you ever visited the facility? Please narrate your experience of the same.
 - Were you satisfied with the services? What is your opinion about the services? Do you think that you would like to give feedback to them? Do you think it will be helpful?
 - In your opinion, do you think that the services can be improved for the adolescents? What can be done? Do you think that the adolescent themselves can be a part of the programme? How that can be done?
- **Adolescent involvement to augment participation**
 - In your opinion, do you think services can be improved for adolescents? Please suggest how.
 - What do you understand by participation? What are the existing platforms (probe for school, AWC, community) where adolescents are participating?
 - What are the roadblocks to adolescent participation in these programs? (Probe for link between service delivery and participation, or any other factors such as discomfort with the service provider, proximity of the centre, lack of privacy, lack of family support, etc.)

- How can the adolescent participation be increased in these programs? Give your suggestions.(Discuss the possibility of their own involvement in the program, make peer groups, explore the platforms available for participation)
- What kind of support would you require to involve adolescents and augment participation? Suggest strategies. (Probe for support of family/community/panchayat/service providers/local leaders/elders and their role).
- Conclude by rounding up the discussion and thank the participants for their valuable time.

DISCUSSION GUIDELINE FOR ANGANWADI WORKERS

1. Location of the community (Note down the name)

- a) District
- b) Block
- c) Panchayat
- d) Village
- e) AWC :kachha/pakka/ICDS/rented (tick the relevant)

Namaste. My name is _____ and I am here today to discuss with you about your thoughts and perceptions, your aspirations, your likings and disliking, challenges that you face in your everyday life and the support that you receive. We would like to know about your village and the community, the services that are available here and your opinion about the quality of the services as an service provider and also as a community member and finally about your opinion in improving the quality of services and participation of the adolescents. Please understand that there is no right or wrong answer and what is important is your views and opinion. This discussion will take around 1 – 1.5 hrs and your names will not be reflected in any of the reports.

- **Please introduce yourself and let us know about the following:**

- Age
- Caste
- Educational level
- Marital Status
- Time since when working as AWW

- **Background Information**

- Linking with the no. of years serving as an AWW....
- So, do you all live in the same village or another village? How long have you been working in this Centre?
- Tell us about the beneficiaries that you cover. How do you identify and enroll your beneficiaries. (Probe for tracking and inclusion of adolescent girls)

- **Tracking and Inclusion of Adolescents**

- According to the last survey how many adolescent girls are there in your area? How did you enroll them? (Probe for home visits, maintaining records). Did any adolescent girls accompany you in identification of other girls?

- How do you come to know if some girls are left out of the programme? What do you do to motivate them to visit the Anganwadi? Do you receive any support to getting those girls (Probe about the initiative, budget provision that they take to ensure participation)? Who supports you from the community?
 - How often and how many adolescent girls come to the AWC? What are the activities that are taken up by you with these girls? Do you involve adolescent girls in any celebrations/special days (Mamta divas, World Breastfeeding day, etc) in your Centre? What role they play? What is the extent of their participation?
 - Do you think it is important for the girls to participate in activities? Why so? Are they self-motivated to come to the AWC? If not then who/what motivates them
 - Do you feel any difference in dealing with this group of beneficiaries (adolescents) as compared to the others (i.e. pregnant women and children)? If so, then please elaborate the ease and or challenge of it. (Probe w.r.t. difficult to track, mobility an issue with this group, shy, inadequate infrastructure at the centre, lack of family support, adolescent girls busy with household chores, etc.)
 - Do adolescent girls approach you for any problems or advice? What kind of problems/issues and how do you deal with them? (probe for experiences)
 - Do you have any link ups with the ANM? Elaborate. Do you take her advice or refer/ consult her for any adolescent health problem?
- **Knowledge and information about the SABLA scheme**
 - Can you please tell us about the SABLA scheme?
 - How do you perceive your role in the same? Under this program what are your responsibilities and what service are provided? Do you think these services are sufficient for the girls or there is a need to change (probe for budget allocation, monitoring, community support etc.)
 - To whom and how are you accountable for this program? (Probe for involvement of the Supervisor, maintain records, attending meetings, etc.)
 - Have you formed the kishori samooh? Was there any problem in forming so? Are they regularly meeting now? How is the samooh functioning? What are the issues that you encounter?

- **Trainings & BCC**

- Did you receive any prior training in dealing with the adolescents before the implementation of the scheme? If yes, then was it adequate? Have you provided any the adolescents? If yes on what? How frequently it is given?
- If no, then is there a felt need for training for AWWs to understand the issues surrounding adolescents?
- Are your centers equipped with adequate BCC materials? Please tell us the BCC that you all have. (Probe for BCC on adolescents)
- Is there a felt need for BCC on adolescents?
- Elaborate the kind of capacity building that you and your centre requires to better deal with adolescents and ultimately increase their participation.

- **Increase Adolescent Participation**

- Do you think it is important for the adolescents to participate? Currently is the participation adequate or there is a need to enhance it? If yes, how? According to you what are the gaps in increasing participation and how can they be plugged?
- In your opinion how can we increase the participation of adolescents so that the voices of the adolescents are heard and they are empowered enough
- Have you discussed about these issues with whom? With girls? Did they ever voice their concerns to you? How frequently that happens?
- What kind of support do you require in this program and in your opinion what additional platforms can be made to enhance participation?
- Conclude by rounding up the discussion and thank the participants for their valuable time.

DISCUSSION GUIDELINE FOR ANGANWADI SUPERVISORS

1. Location of the community (Note down the name)
 - 1.1) District
 - 1.2) Panchayat
 - 1.3) Block
 - 1.4) Village
2. A round of introductions. Start with self.
 - A brief introduction of the Moderator, Facilitator.
 - Aim of conducting the FGD & approximate time
 - Establishing trust of the respondents (names will not be mentioned; there is no right or wrong answers; your responses are very valuable to us as they would help us in improving the quality of services) and taking informed consent for noting down/recording the FGD.
3. Introduction of the respondents. Note down the respondent details
 - Age
 - Caste
 - Educational level
 - Marital Status
 - Length of time as Supervisor
 - AWCs Population covered
4. How many AWCs do you visit each month? With so many Centers to choose from, how do you decide which center to visit in a particular month?
5. What are the approaches that you adopt for supervision (Probe for home visits, checking diaries/registers, interacting with beneficiaries, community stake holders, no of adolescent participating etc)
6. What are you most interested in finding out when you visit an AWC? What if you see there is low participation in an AWC, what do you do? How do you plan to increase participation? Do you think there is a need for better support (monetary, training) to increase participation. What are the major barriers to participation? What do you think should be done with the community to increase participation?
7. Are you aware of the SABLA program? Elaborate. How do you perceive your role in it?
8. Is it being implemented in the Centers under you?
9. What as per your knowledge is the extent of participation of adolescents in your Centers under this program? Are you satisfied with it?
10. During your visit, what are your interactions with the AWW on this program?
11. Do you see any need to increase participation of adolescents in the program? Have you tried any means to do so? Is it discussed in the sector meetings? (Describe the process) Is there any participation of girls in the meetings? Do you think it would be of any help?
12. According to you what are the challenges in increasing the participation. How can they be surpassed, in your opinion? What help or support do you require in doing so?
13. Conclude by rounding up the discussion and thank the participants for their valuable time.

6. Profile of participants

Adolescent girls

In Navsari (Dhakvada village) the FGD was conducted with 15 school going adolescent girls and 7 out of school adolescent girls and the average age was 18 yrs. All of them were unmarried and belonged to SC and OBC categories.

In Ahmedabad district (Singerva village) the FGD was conducted with 13 adolescent girls in the age group of 13-19 years. Most of them belonged to SC and OBC categories primarily from Thakor, Chauhan, Kahar & Rabari caste. Most of the girls were school drop outs, however completed their primary schooling and only 2 of them were married.

In Narmada district (Nandod village) the FGD was conducted with 16 adolescent girls in the age group of 13-19 years. Most of them belonged to SC and OBC categories and from Vasava, Tadvi and Baria caste. Most of the girls were school drop outs, however completed their 10th standard and all of them were unmarried.

In Kutchh district (Vithone village) the FGD was conducted with 21 adolescent girls and the average age was 18 years. Most of the girls complete their studies till 10th and belonged to SC and OBC categories and from dominant castes like Patel, Ahir and Rabari. The main reason for dropping out of school are economic condition of family, household responsibilities, taking care of siblings, failed in examination and lack of interest in studies.

ANGANWADI WORKERS

In Navsari (Dhakvada village) the FGD was conducted with 13 AWWs and the respondents had an average experience of 15 years. All the AWWs resided in the same village as their Centre.

In Ahmedabad district (Singerva village) the FGD was conducted with 15 AWWs and the respondents had an average work experience of 10 years. All the AWWs resided in the same village where the centre is located.

In Narmada district (Nandod village) the FGD was conducted with 20 AWWs and the age of the participants was from 29-48 years. Most of them belonged to Hindu ST and OBC categories and primarily from Tadvi, Vasava and Baria caste. One AWW belonged to Islam religion. Most of the AWWs were graduate and 3 AWWs who had education till 7-8 standards. All AWWs were married and only 6 out of 20 were working since more than 20 years while rest had work experience between 4-5 years.

In Kutchh district (Vithone village) the FGD was with 22 Anganwadi workers and the average age group was 35yrs. Most of them were 12th pass and the working years ranged from 6 to 26 yrs. Majority of the AWWs resided in the same village while 5 of them stays in other village and commuted to their Centre daily.

ANGANWADI SUPERVISOR

In Navsari (Dhakvada village) the FGD was conducted with 18 Supervisors and most of them were working as supervisor for more than 12 years. All of them were married and were graduates.

In Ahmedabad district (Singerva village) the FGD was conducted with 10 ICDS Supervisors and the age range of the Supervisors was between 43-56 years. Most of them belonged to SC and OBC categories and primarily from Thakor, and Chauhan caste. All of them were either Graduate or Post graduate and almost all of them were married. As Supervisor, only 2 out of 10 were working since 3 years while rest had experience of more than 20 years.

In Narmada district (Nandod village) the FGD was conducted 19 supervisors and 6 of them are direct recruits who are graduates. Most of the supervisors are responsible for managing 15-20 AWCs and few of them have to manage 25-30 AWCs.

In Kutchh district (Vithone village) the FGD was with a group of 19 supervisors and they have an experience span of 3 to 31 years and most of the the supervisors are responsible to manage 20-25 AWCs while few are responsible for managing 45 AWCs.

7. District Reports:

Key points of discussions

Navsari District

Dhakvada village, Gamdevi 1 block

UNICEF in partnership with the Department of women and child development initiated the review of SABLA programme to understand the scope of adolescent participation in the existing programme. The objective is to identify the existing structures of the adolescent participation platforms within the programme, the current scope of participation within the programme and the possible entry points to enhance adolescent participation. Three FGDs were conducted with Adolescent girls, Anganwadi Workers and Anganwadi Supervisors in the Navsari district.

The key findings are summarized below:

Adolescent Girls

Focus group discussions were conducted with 12 adolescent girls with the average age of 16.5 years. Majority of them were studying in class XII. Majority of girls from their villages are currently studying or normally continue their studies for higher education, at times till college. They shared that girls take vocational courses such as nursing, computers, beautician and tailoring as they finish schooling. Most of the girls mentioned that their parents support their decision of studying further and even if it is staying in a hostel and completing their education.

Participants mentioned that they have been provided the opportunity to discuss their plans with their parents and voice out their aspirations (particularly to their father). Some of the girls were prepared to live in hostels to complete their higher education. The participants considered education to be very important as it would make them independent, help them earn money through jobs, consequently they would be able to contribute in household expenses and buy things. One of the responses was "*Paisa kamay to kharch karva made*" (If we earn, then we can spend). Another participant shared, "*Aapde bhanya hoiye to apadne aagad jeevan maa koi mushkeli aave to aa kaam laage...*" (If we are educated, then in future, if something goes wrong in our life then it can be helpful...).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION:

Most of the girls participated in different co-curricular activities and competitions in school particularly in activities like 'mehndi' & 'rangoli' competition, elocution competition, patriotic song singing competition, drawing competition, sport, and science fair, etc. They mentioned that participation gave a boost to their confidence, helped in physical and mental development, learning new things, learning about their peers from other places and also refreshed their minds. According to one of the girls who had participated at the district level competition, "*beeji chokario jode hostel maa rehvu pade, navu navu shikhvaa made, ghani majaa aave.. bolvaama himmat vadhe..*" (We have to stay with other girls in a hostel, learn newthings, it is lot of fun. We get courage to speak before people/strangers). This indicates that it is primarily in schools that they get the necessary platform to participate, which they feel impacts their development.

MOBILITY:

During their free time the girls watch TV at home, help their mothers in the household chores, visit their friends or visit the AWC in their village. They are allowed to go out alone to meet their friends, visit the AWC and also go out of their villages to study as the school in the village was only up till class V III. Almost all the girls rode bicycles and would travel to school in groups. However they mentioned that they are also accompanied by their mother, brothers or some guardian if it is late in night. There was a mention about the rape incidence which happened in Delhi and they said that they have to be more careful and parents also are little concerned about their mobility post that incidence.

CHANGES DURING ADOLESCENCE:

The participants were aware about the issues related to menstruation and the changes that occur during adolescence and their primary source of information was their mothers, sisters and the AWW. They were comfortable discussing these issues with their mothers and the AWW. All the girls revealed that the AWW taught them how to use the cloth, to wash with soap, dry them in sunlight, and maintain hygiene. One of the girls revealed, "*ahiya evu vichare k rate masik wada kapda dhova nahi..pan teacherben amne samjhaye, gharwala ne samjahve tyare gharna maani jay...*" (Here (in the community), they think that the soiled cloth should not be washed in the night. However the AWW explained us and then also our family, and then they agreed..)

AWARENESS ABOUT AWC AND SABLA:

The participants were well informed about the activities of the AWC as they visit the centre regularly. They also participate in celebrations organized at the AWC such as Nutrition week, Independence/Republic day, rallies, Mamta din, etc. A meeting is held every Saturday at the Centre and an average of 40 girls attends the meeting. They also bring their friends along with them for the meeting.

For health problems related to menstruation such as abdominal pain, or any other problem, girls reported approaching the AWW who in turn referred them to the ANM. However they are not aware of any adolescent's friendly clinic and have never visited one.

All the girls reported to being satisfied with the AWW and ANM's services. One of the participants revealed, "*mane chhakar aavta..me teacher ben ne kidhu..maru anganwadi maa lohi tapasyu. Kubaj ochu hatu..7 taka.. pachi mane iron ni godi ben apta darroj.. aaje maaru lohi 12 taka thai gayu che..*" (I would get dizzy often.. i told this to the AWW, she got my blood tested. It was very low, 7%.. then she gave me iron tablet to be taken every day and my blood (hb) is now 12%...)

However, the girls also mentioned that they primarily follow what the AWW proposes and supports her in conducting the activity. They never decide on the activities and have never given any feedback to the AWW on the quality of the activities conducted or their need or the changes that they want in the AWC.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROGRAM:

When asked about suggestions, the girls suggested that it would be helpful to conduct meetings with the mothers so that they are aware about the kind of information provided in the AWC and would cooperate at home. They also suggested that although Saturday was best suited for younger girls but for older girls studying in class XI and XII, they should keep the meeting at different time so that these girls can also come. They suggested use of charts, posters, toys, films, have a small library with books on Swami Vivekananda & general knowledge which would help them in acquiring knowledge and information. They also suggested having computer learning facility at the centre.

ADOLESCENT INVOLVEMENT TO AUGMENT PARTICIPATION:

There was absence of feedback mechanism as they never gave feedback on any of the issues to the AWC or to any other service provider. However, they reported that they could inform the AWW regarding what they wanted to learn or know more about. Only two of the participants amongst the group were aware about the sakhi and saheli formed under the program. Rest of the group was not aware about any such group in their respective centre. According to the two participants the roles of sakhi and saheli were not well defined and so they ended up doing nothing concrete. When asked most of the girls also expressed their desire to become Sakhi or Saheli.

The group revealed that there was no other forum besides the AWC or their school where they could put up their views and discuss freely on issues. However the participants suggested "swadhyay pariwar" a religious body that met every day and adolescent boys and girls participated from the community. This body undertakes religious preaching and also issues such as vices, alcohol/tobacco consumption among adolescents are discussed. The group mentioned that it is important to have participation at higher level of meetings at block/district and at state level where they could voice their issues. Some of the issues which they intended to discuss at higher forums are cleanliness around the AWC, age of marriage for girls, gender disparity, dowry, female foeticide, etc.

An informal discussion with a group (seven) of school dropout adolescent girls mentioned that the major reasons for dropping out of school were poor financial condition, mother's illness, taking care after younger siblings and failed in the class so quit studying. Most of the girls were reluctant to resume studies. They were not articulate with their aspirations and wished to acquire some skills like tailoring and stitch clothes which would help them in earning.

This group was aware of the AWC and the activities and mentioned that they enjoy going to the centre as they learn about cleanliness, hygiene, nutrition, they get food packets, etc. They were also aware about competitions organized at the centre for adolescent girls and also participated in those. However, they were irregular in attending the Saturday as they lacked time and would return from work only by 5 pm. However they would visit the centre during the week and also mentioned about Sakhi and Saheli who came looking for them. They considered Anganwadi as the space where they could meet friends and the AWW as someone with whom they can discuss freely. They felt that it

was important for them to learn whatever was taught at the Centre as it would be useful to them in future. So, whenever they had free time they would go to the Centre. Overall, the school dropout girls are not regular for the meetings and their participation is minimal. It is a challenge to include this group in the program and ensure participation from the out of school girls on a sustained basis.

ANGANWADI WORKERS

The FGD was conducted with 13 AWWs and the respondents had an average experience of 15 years. All the AWWs resided in the same village as their Centre.

TRACKING AND INCLUSION OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS:

AWWs revealed that they conduct regular home visits and have a survey register of their population which is updated regularly. They did mention about taking help of adolescents in identification of their peers in the community. They did mention that though they identify 60 to 70 adolescents approximately in a centre with a large population while a smaller population centre had 35 to 40 adolescent girls. AWWs revealed that out of the identified adolescents only 60 to 70% attended the meeting on Saturday.

According to the respondents there were very few families who did not send their girls such as higher caste family girls did not come at all. Otherwise there were instances such as exams were approaching or some family function such as wedding, etc. when they did not send. Also, girls going out for work as labourers don't come regularly for the meetings.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SABLA:

The participants mentioned that they interact with the girls every Saturday in a meeting wherein information on various topics such as nutrition, changes during adolescence, menstruation, nutritious recipe making, etc. are provided. Also other activities such as different types of competitions organized for adolescents are carried out. The girls are also involved in breast feeding week, nutrition week, celebration of all festivals and Independence Day/Republic Day, rallies, etc. AWWs have organised for exposure visits to police station, dairy, bank, post office, and picnic for the girls.

On "Mamta Taruni divas" which is celebrated once in every quarter the girls are weighed, Hb test and BMI done. This was done in collaboration with the ANM.

However, the participants expressed the problem of arranging for prizes in these competitions because of very low budgetary provision. They had tried getting "lok fado" (people's contribution) but this being a routine, people are not very cooperative. AWWs revealed that they were embarrassed in asking for money so frequently, therefore in many instances the AWWs themselves paid for it. A similar problem was revealed about exposure visits. Due to extremely low budgetary provision, the AWWs had to shell out money from their own pockets to fund these trips.

AWWs reported forming Sakhi Saheli, i.e. Kishori samoohas and these girls meet those girls who does not come for the program in addition to helping the Worker in organizing the Saturday meetings or any other celebrations. A separate meeting of the leaders were not conducted neither any roles nor responsibilities were outlined. There exists the lack of clarity about the role of Sakhi and Saheli and also formation of the Samoohas.

The AWWs maintain 4 registers, which are checked by the supervisors. They mentioned that supervisors also came for home visits to the adolescent girls' houses particularly those who were not coming and also attended Saturday meetings sometimes.

TRAININGS AND BCC:

AWWs could recollect receiving single training on SABLA at the initiation of the program. They expressed felt need for training on program implementation, record management, activity planning and communication skills with adolescents. They identified the need for the availability of the IEC materials on adolescents to make their interaction easy and effective. There was a mention about the requirement of weighing scale as they had to depend on the ANM to bring the same on Mamta din.

Need for an increased budget allocation was mentioned and to have particular provisions of providing snacks/refreshments to adolescent girls during weekly meetings. Need for support to initiate vocational training programs for adolescents at the Centre such as tailoring, beautician, computers, etc was mentioned. They also suggested the provision for inviting resource persons/speakers for Saturday meeting to talk to the adolescent girls on different issues as per the need of the group e.g career counseling, health, nutrition, etc.

INCREASE ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION:

According to the group there were some adolescents who were not regular, but 99% adolescents were in contact with them. Adolescents who were engaged as daily wagers or those who were studying and could not attend the meetings. However, the AWWs shared that these girls were later contacted and given relevant services. According to them additional platform that existed in their village for enhancing participation was that of "swadhyay parivar" (a religious body), wherein all the community members including adolescents actively participated.

SUPERVISORS

A discussion was ensued with a group of about 18-20 supervisors. Following are the broad issues that were culled out from the discussion:

Supervisors generally prioritized AWCs that were weak Centres. During their visit they check as to how many adolescent girls had gone to school, to tuitions, how many had gone as daily wage labourer, how many were there and had not come, were called. According to them girls who are studying cannot be forced, moreover girls who have to go for earning can also not be forced. Girls who have to look after their younger siblings, sometimes come. Those girls whose parents are not sending, we speak to them and they send immediately.

They accepted that although sakhi –saheli was formed but they did not function as desired and they were not given any training. According to the supervisors, the sakhi-saheli groups are difficult to maintain as they are not very active because of time constraint. Also, not many girls were willing to become leaders. Further, they were out of the program as they turn 19 so again new leader needs to be appointed. Thus, several operational difficulties are faced by the sakhi-saheli groups.

The Supervisors reported that the most difficult to reach were the out-of school adolescents as they would go away in GIDC, or chickoo farms during season, as labourers, so they could not meet them. According to them, 20% girls are engaged in manual labour and they are all a part of the program but are not regular in attending Saturday meetings.

Saturday is the designated day for Adolescent meeting and they expressed the need for training for themselves and the AWWs. They wanted specific training on reporting format, management of budget, communication skill and activity planning along with availability of charts, posters, TV, Computer, through which they can discuss adolescent issues and make learning enjoyable and interesting. The group voted for the participation of adolescents in higher forums and discussing their needs. They considered SABLA as a very good program as it involved adolescents.

Kutch District

Vithon village, Nakhatrana Block

UNICEF in partnership with the Department of women and child development initiated the review of SABLA programme to understand the scope of adolescent participation in the existing programme. The objective is to identify the existing structures of the adolescent participation platforms within the programme, the current scope of participation within the programme and the possible entry points to enhance adolescent participation. Three FGDs were conducted with Adolescent girls, Anganwadi Workers and Anganwadi Supervisors in the Kutch district.

The key findings are summarized below:

Adolescent Girls

Focus group discussions were conducted with 21 adolescent girls with the average age group is 18 years.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION:

Most of the villages have school till 10th standard, and the primary section is separate for boys and girls while 9-10th standard is co education. Most of the girls complete their studies till 10th and for higher studies they have to travel to Bhuj or Nakhatrana. The girls mentioned about the dominant castes like patel, ahir and rabari. The main reason for dropping out of school are economic condition of family, household responsibilities, taking care of siblings, failed in examination and lack of interest in studies. One of the main reasons for dropping out of school was poor financial condition of the family reasons and is evident through the statement "Maare bhanvu tu pan mara maa-baap ni paristhiti sari nahati etle mare saat dhoran pachi bhanvanu chodi vadi maa kaame javu padyu..." (*I wanted to study, but as my parent's economic condition was not good, I had to leave studies after class 7, and had to start working in the fields....*).

During discussion, the girls mentioned that in "koli" community, education is not considered important and the children are not sent to school, particularly girls. A participant said "Ben, ahiya ek koli ni com che... e loko chokriyone bhanavtaj nathi. Ahiya najik ek gam che emaa kolinij vasti che... e loko school shu, anganwadi pan nathi mokalta potana chokraone..." (*Here there is a community called "koli" ...they don't educate their girls...there is a nearby village which has majority "koli" population. Leave alone school, they don't even send their children to anganwadi also...*)

It was also mentioned that in certain communities girl's education was not given enough credence. A girl from the Rabari community mentioned that she was forced to discontinue her studies after class

XIIth, "Amaari kom maa chokariyo bharat kaam kare...jo na aavde ane sastre jay to tyan saru no lage...etle amara mummy-pappa amne vadhare naa bhanave...amare pehla bharat kaam avadvu joi. Bhani ne shu karvana? Naukri ochi karvana? Amara mummy amne evu puche.. gharkaam shikho, bhatrat kaam shikho..sastre jasho ne nahi aavde to amari ijat jashe k maa-baape kashu shikhvadyu nathi.." (*In our community girls do embroidery work..if they don't know it and they go to their in-law's house, then it will not give a good impression...So our parents don't educate us much..They ask us, what will you do with education? Are you going to take up a job? Instead they ask us to learn house work, embroidery..when you get married and go to your in-law's house and if you don't know all this then we would be put to shame they (in-laws) will feel that we have not taught you anything...*). They also mentioned that in their community, the boys are allowed to study as much as they want and are supported for their tuition classes whereas girls are discouraged to continue their studies irrespective of the financial condition of the household.

The girls mentioned that they participate in different activities like drama, sports, science projects, rangoli, recitation completion, navratri mahotsav, cultural programmes, teacher's day and NSS at school. Few participants from a particular caste voiced that there exists discrimination based on caste in the school as girls from the dominant caste gets better opportunities to participate in comparison to girls from lower caste (Muslim). According to them the upper caste girls and boys were given more opportunities to participate in drama, cultural programmes like garba, etc in the school. They also shared that similar discrimination occurs at AWC too but they have never shared this with anyone. Some girls (SC) shared that the teachers give opportunities to some girls to participate in cultural programs every year and some of them are never allowed to participate. They mentioned that this discrimination is prevalent even in the primary school and since they were very young, they couldn't voice this issue.

The girls discussed about the introduction of uniform in Government run schools at the primary level and stated that this had a strong bearing on sending children to school as the parents could not afford the expenses of a uniform and school shoes. One of the participant narrated, " Jyare mane khabar padi tyare hun school naa acharya ne madva gai, karank hun tej school ni vidyarthini hati etle mane evu lagyu k mare aa vishe vaat karvi joiye. Me temne kahyu k tame avo uniform compulsory che evo rule kem karyo? Atyare ek vyakti rojna 100 rupiya kamay tyare e 500 rupiyano uniform ane shoes no karcho kevi reete kare? Ene naaj posay ane etle e badak ne bhanva naa mokle. Tame aava rules dakhal kartaa pehla vicharvu joiye.." (*When i came to know about this i went to meet the Principal of the school, afterall i am an ex student of that school and i thought that i should tell her about this issue.. i told her, why did you make shoes and uniform compulsory? For a man who earns Rs 100/- daily, how do you think he can afford uniform and shoes worth Rs 500?..He cannot afford, so he does not send his child to school... You should think before introducing such rules...*). She added that due to this rule there was at least a 25% reduction in children who were going to school. Education is free, but only text books and the parents had to pay for notebooks and now additional cost of uniform, shoes and socks.

All the girls in the group considered education to be important in life. According to them it will give them confidence, it would help them to rear their children in a better way, if there is any problem in the future, they would be able to deal with it as they would be educated. Some of them wanted to work, do a job while some shared that the husband can only take this decision. One of the girls who is already engaged says "mara husband evu kahe k tare naukri karvani jaroor nati. Hun aapdu badhanu puru karish.." (*My husband says that you don't need to do a job i will manage everything...*). She further added that doing a job and looking after children would be very difficult so she thought it would be better if she did not work. The girls mentioned about the gender disparity in education and one of the participant, "Ben, amara maa-baap ne amaara bhai bhane tevi iccha.. Ahiya chokro naa bhanto hoy to pan ene parane bhanave,eni pachad ketloy kharcho kare.. ane amne bhanvu hoy tyare bhanva nathi deta..."(*Our parents want our brothers to study..here, if the boy does not study then also they force him to study, spend so much money behind him and here we are we want to study and we are not allowed...*).

One of the interesting observations is that the parents ask for their decision before finalising marriage proposal only when they are before 18 years and are also given the choice to disapprove any proposal if it is not as per their liking. However, if the girl crosses 18 years, so she doesn't have the right to choose rather the parents takes the decision. They mentioned that in Rabari community the girls get married at 15-16 years, in Patel community it is 20-21 years and in Muslims (mianna) the girls get married at very early age and other Muslim girls at 17-18 years.

MOBILITY:

Most of the girls are primarily engaged in household chores, agricultural workers, animal husbandry, sewing and embroidery. Girls from some particular caste are allowed to move around on their own in the village during day time. Girls are not allowed to travel outside the village alone and are always accompanied by elders. But at times they travel out of village in groups and return back before it is dark. While travelling, if there are incidence of eve teasing, they protest against the boys.

CHANGES DURING ADOLESCENCE:

The girls were aware of the changes that occur during adolescence age and mentioned about menstruation, physical changes, sexual attraction and mental changes. They are aware about anemia, hygiene and visit the PHC along with AWW. If they have any problems they visit the ANM and ASHA to seek treatment along with AWW. They received all the relevant information from the AWC. During discussion, if the girls are not satisfied with the responses from the AWW, they visit the MO and share their problem.

AWARENESS ABOUT AWCs AND SABLA:

Most of the girls visit the Anganwadi Centre on every Wednesday and they visit the AWC on their own. They are aware of the Mamta din which is organized on a fixed day, every month and the adolescent girls participates in the same. On that day they are given nutritious food packets and information related to health, menstruation, changes during adolescence, learning to prepare recipes

from nutritious snacks, their height and weight were measured, IFA are provided. Majority of the girls visit the AWC once in month and are aware of the SABLA scheme.

Through SABLA scheme, the girls received information on self defence, how to cook, different Govt schemes (Kunwarbai nu mamuro, vidyasahayak bond, saraswati sadhna yojana) and have accessed the schemes. The information is provided through the available charts and each of them received 'SABLA pothi' a few days back. They have been taken for exposure visits to post office, police stations and bank and the arrangement for the exposure visits are managed by the Sarpanch. All the girls are taken to the PHC every three months for regular health check up which consists of Hb test, BMI and Immunisation. However, only few girls are aware of the Sakhi-sahelis and their role is to motivate other girls to visit the AWC the Centre and talk to their peers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROGRAM:

The girls shared the opinion that the AWW should not be biased towards any community. They suggested exposure visits which would provide them entertainment as well as information and knowledge. They requested to initiate a HELPLINE particularly for girls so that girls can access that during problems and mentioned about Hello Sakhi helpline (K.M.V.S) which is functional in Kutchh. Through street plays, drama and cultural activities, community should be sensitized about child marriage and eve teasing.

ADOLESCENT INVOLVEMENT TO AUGMENT PARTICIPATION:

Most of the girls are aware of the AWC, the activities and the girls suggested to have a cleaner AWC, organize film shows, to have interacting learning tools, books, computer, TV, so that the girls can learn something new. They were keen to learn new things, and gather updated information on issues other than health. They also felt that AWW should give more time to the adolescents and to the SABLA programme. They suggested that the AWC should initiate sewing classes, mehndi, embroidery, beautician classes and other income generating training classes which would increase participation of the girls. There can be one vocational training centre in the village so that it is easily accessible to girls.

ANGANWADI WORKERS

The FGD was conducted with 22 AWWs and the respondents had an experience of 6 to 26 years. Majority of the AWWs resided in the same village as their Centre, while some (5) of them stayed in other village and commuted to their centre daily.

TRACKING AND INCLUSION OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS:

AWWs conduct regular home visits and identify the adolescent girls. However they suggested that sessions should be conducted with the mothers of these adolescent girls to ensure that there is regular participation of the girls in the meetings.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SABLA

AWWs are aware about the SABLA scheme but didn't receive any formal training pertaining to the implementation of the SABLA program. Hence, they were not aware of budget allocation, activities to be conducted in the program such as exposure visits, etc. However, they organized competitions, at the centre for adolescents but while giving prizes they faced problems as they did not have funds. There were some safety issues raised for AWWs and AWHs as there was the nuisance of alcohol in these villages. They did make sakhi sahelis groups but they needs to be changed after every 2 months. AWWs felt that the Sakhi – Sahelis should continue for atleast one year as they take almost two months to understand their roles and needs more time to perform their responsibilities in a better way.

TRAININGS AND BCC:

The emphasized on the need of training on SABLA module and also on how to design activities, communication skills, budget management and most importantly they also needs to be updated on relevant issues for adolescents. They mentioned that if they can be trained on using computer so that they can train the adolescents.

INCREASED ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION:

AWWs mentioned that if interesting activities are planned and conducted in the AWC , then only there can be an enhanced participation from the adolescents. They suggested involving resource persons for adolescent focussed sessions, TV, computer, in the centre which would increase adolescent participation. One of the workers shared, "The girls ask us that what we will do at the Centre? The same type of lectures are boring..also they expect some money in return.. we should give them some stipend also.. then the girls would definitely come..."

AWWs suggested for some budgetary provision of providing snacks/refreshments to adolescent girls when they come for meeting/ capacity building programme and also to fund the exposure visits, stipends/scholarship, travelling allowances for the adolescents. Need for support to initiate vocational training programs for adolescents at the Centre such as tailoring, beautician, computers, etc was mentioned. They also suggested the provision for inviting resource persons/speakers for meeting to talk to the adolescent girls on different issues as per the need of the group e.g. career counselling, health, nutrition, etc.

AWWs mentioned that the salary of the AWW needs to be reviewed keeping the workload and timings of the AWC in mind. They mentioned that they are not able to focus on the SABLA programme with the over demanding workload and limited availability of help.

SUPERVISORS

A FGD was conducted with a group of 19 supervisors and they have an experience span of 3 to 31 years. Following are the broad issues that were culled out from the discussion:

While most the supervisors are responsible to manage 20-25 AWCs, few are responsible for 45 AWCs which hinders the regular visit to the AWCs. They identify AWCs based on the parameters like poor record maintenance, not maintaining timely operation of the AWC, interior AWCs and AWCs with lesser attendance rate. Supervisors get involved in the launch of new programmes, or they have to participate in any training and other programme (health camps, Immunisation week, Krushi rath, election) then they are not able to conduct AWC visit. They mentioned that due to all these engagements their workload has 75% of the external work and only 25% of work is related to ICDS including SABLA. They have to work beyond the duty hours.

They have received the SABLA training but there is a need for a refresher for them and the AWW. However, they felt the methodology of training should be changed and the trainings should be conducted in an interactive way. They have to ensure that they monitor the following activities for all the AWCs like cleanliness of the AWC, check the menu, attendance of children, check the registers, follow up on malnourished children, checking the quality of the food prepared in the AWC, conduct adolescent survey every three months, monitor the household visits, participate in meetings. Few supervisors mentioned that at time they face language problems and access to interior villages is difficult. They suggested that there should be workshops/meetings with the parents of the girls to ensure participation and they should also be involved in activity planning.

The participants suggest that the supervisors should conduct supervision on rotational level. There are certain interior villages where the customs are very orthodox and involvement from girls and women are minimal. In these communities, the girls are not allowed to study and women are not allowed to participate in any activities other than household chores and hence it is very difficult for involving the adolescent. Any ICDS programme related activities should be conducted at village level at a convenient time so that the adolescents can participate and the community can be involved. It is important to involve the gram panchayat in all the activities so that there is not budget constraint and social problem in the village. There should be participation from VHSC, school, ASHA, AWW, MO/ANM in gram sabha meetings so that the community can discuss the relevant issues.

Adolescents should be taken for exposure visits which would include visit to historical places and other relevant places and provide necessary budget for the activities. The activities should be developed only after discussion with adolescents. Since, there are a significant number of NRIs from that area, the supervisor mobilises resources through the Sarpanch and uses the fund for the activities related to the AWC. Supervisors mentioned that the salary needs to be reviewed keeping the workload and timings in mind and provide vehicle to travel to interior villages.

Narmada District

Nandod village, Rajpipla block

UNICEF in partnership with the Department of women and child development initiated the review of SABLA programme to understand the scope of adolescent participation in the existing programme. The objective is to identify the existing structures of the adolescent participation platforms within the programme, the current scope of participation within the programme and the possible entry points to enhance adolescent participation. Three FGDs were conducted with Adolescent girls, Anganwadi Workers and Anganwadi Supervisors in the Narmada district.

The key findings are summarised below:

Adolescent Girls

Focus group discussions were conducted with 16 adolescent girls with the age group of 13 to 19 years and primarily belonged to ST and OBC categories and primarily from Tadvi, Vasava and Baria caste. Most of the girls are school dropout while some of them are primary drop outs while most of the others dropped out after completion of 10th standard. All the girls are unmarried and they are involved in household work while some of them were involved as agricultural labourers.

All the girls were from different villages of Nandod and all the villages had a primary school. The reason for dropping out of school were house chores, distance from home, poor financial condition, early marriage and girls not being allowed to move alone in the village. Most of the girls couldn't articulate about their aspiration while some of them mentioned they want to study nursing and doing jobs. According to girls, boys can study as much they want and can go to nearby village for further study and the family members took the decision about the discontinuation of their studies as they don't consider their education to be important to their family. While most of them wanted to continue their studies and expressed the desire that girls should be provided the opportunity to study as much as they want. Parents are not supportive of higher education because in the village there is no school after 8th standard education and they don't allow the girls to go outside the village to continue their study. Also the terrain is such that the transport facility is very limited and during rainy season there is problem in transport.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION:

Extremely limited participation from the adolescent girls and they participate only during health checkups on Mamta days.

MOBILITY:

During their free time the girls help their mothers in the household chores as they are not allowed to go out alone to meet their friends or to go out of their villages. "*(Jamano Kharab che)*" Almost all the girls would travel to in the village in groups or they are escorted with an elderly person (bhabhi). However they mentioned that they are also accompanied by their mother, brothers or some elder people if it is late in night. Since they have no recreational options available they spend considerable time at home.

CHANGES DURING ADOLESCENCE:

The girls were aware about the changes that happen during adolescent age and the primary source of information was school teacher, friends, peer group, sister in law and Nurse ben. They share any problems related to menstruation with their mothers and sister in law. And if they don't receive any solution to their problems, they would discuss the same with the AWW and the ANM. They would visit the PHC/Subcentre for any health related issues particularly related to menstruation and felt that the ANM should discuss more on sexual and reproductive health with them. They were not able to articulate the consequences of child marriage.

AWARENESS ABOUT AWCs AND SABLA:

The girls were representing different AWCs from different villages but they were not aware of SABLA programme neither about Sakhi – saheli groups. They would visit the AWC to receive the tiifin packets and the nutrition health counselling and were satisfied with the nutrition health information provided by the AWW. They didn't feel the need for any other information or activities that AWW can organize for them and hence wouldn't participate in the AWC activities. Very few of the girls would visit the AWC and participate in the activities. They mentioned that they were comfortable is discussing about their personal/physical problems with the AWW. However, the girls were more interested in receiving training in the AWC on different activities like Mehendi and beauty parlor course. All the girls voiced that education is important for women empowerment and to earn money which in turn increases the self confidence. But they were not clear about their future plan of studying or their aspirations and would like to voice the issue of importance of girls' education, early marriage, the need to sensitize the community to promote participation of girls. However they were aware about the correct age of marriage for girls i. e. after 18 years only.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROGRAM:

The girls mentioned about conducting Mehendi, tailoring and beauty parlour classes in the AWC which would promote active participation. They also felt that there is a dire need to sensitize the family members regarding the importance of active participation of adolescent girls in the AWC. Exposure visits to other places with AWW will help them to understand the approach that other AWCs are taking to conduct the necessary activities.

ADOLESCENT INVOLVEMENT TO AUGMENT PARTICIPATION:

The participants were unaware about the SABLA programme and their participation in the AWC was minimal and would access the AWC to receive the food packets. Increasing adolescent participation in the mentioned area remains to be a challenge because of the topographical conditions (rainy season, it becomes dark after 4 pm) along with very limited transport facility after 4 pm, security reasons and reluctance from the family members.

ANGANWADI WORKERS:

The FGD was conducted with 24 AWWs and the respondents had an average experience of 5 to 27 years. 22 of the AWWs resided in the same village where the AWC was located and rest of the two travels from different village.

TRACKING AND INCLUSION OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS:

AWWs revealed that they conduct regular home visits (5 homes daily) and have a survey register of their population which is updated regularly. During the household survey, they identify almost 20 to 25 adolescents approximately in a centre and most of them are school drop outs. The drop outs are engaged as daily wage workers, agricultural workers and works in pharmaceutical manufacturing plants where they does the packing and labelling jobs. Some of them are also involved in doing stitching and embroidery work and they earn Rs 100-200 per day. They spend a lot of time in the factory and don't take leave.

Very few girls reported to attend the SABLA meetings and they only attend when their parents are convinced about the activities. AWWs have to visit the house and request them to attend the meeting, discuss about the meeting with the parents and even then not everyone send their daughters to the AWC. Some of the girls visit the AWC once in a month while some visits twice in a month. AWW travels to far away houses to deliver the nutrition packets to the girls. During the meetings AWW provides information on supplementary nutrition, advantages to go to school, reproductive health cleanliness etc. AWW organises mehndi competition, rangoli competition and the participation is good but during meetings the participation is less. They mentioned that it is easy to work with the pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children and involve them in different activities while it is very difficult with adolescent girls.

While the girls hesitate to share their problems with AWW, some of them shares with the AWWs for their problems mainly related to menstrual cycle. Adolescent girls would discuss their problems like menstruation related queries, harassment by boys and health related topics and seek their support to solve problems. In case of any health problems, the girls are referred to the ANM by the AWW.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SABLA

All the AWWs didn't receive complete training on SABLA and hence they don't have complete information about the programme. During the last training, they were handed over the SABLA module and were given preliminary understanding about the programme. There is a budgetary constraint in conducting the exposure visit and they are not able to conduct the same. All the AWWs voiced that capacity building of the adolescent girls should be done at their village level to ensure better participation of the girls. They maintain the relevant SABLA record and SABLA SABLA book for

each girl. Selection of Sakhi – saheli is difficult as nobody wants to work towards it and is too busy for these activities. Supervisor and CDPO regularly monitor activities related to SABLA programme. They mentioned about the budgetary constraint because of which they are not capable of organising activities in different villages as there is no travelling allowance for the girls. They mentioned the need for posters, flip charts, CD to provide information on SABLA related issues to the adolescent girls.

TRAININGS AND BCC:

The AWWs could recollect that one training of 3 days on SABLA was done by their supervisor at the initiation of the program and there is a need for refresher training. The workers expressed felt need for training to improve the program implementation. According to the group, IEC material is available on adolescents and it would be good if the same are provided as big posters / Flip charts, audio visual to make interaction more easy and interesting.

There is a need for better budget allocation in SABLA programme keeping in mind the inflation and some budgetary provision of providing snacks/refreshments to adolescent girls when they come for meeting/ capacity building programme. Need for support to initiate vocational training programs for adolescents at the centre such as tailoring, beautician, computers, etc was mentioned. They suggested the provision for inviting resource persons/speakers for meeting to talk to the adolescent girls on different issues as per the need of the group e.g. career counselling, health, nutrition, etc.

INCREASED ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION:

Participation of the girls should be linked with some scheme like if girls attend the SABLA activities then they should be given priorities in getting government benefits. Other village level workers like school teacher, ASHA should also interact with adolescent girls for better implementation of the schemes. Most of them said that they must organize SABLA activities to show the difference in adolescent girls who participated in SABLA activities with that who could not attend SABLA activities. Major challenges identified were travelling time and the cost incurred in visiting the AWC in addition to loosing the daily wages by the adolescent girls. There can be an increased participation if they are provided travelling allowance along with refreshments.

Participants believe that the SABLA programme is very effective, interesting and important but because of work load they are not able to put focus on this programme. They also mention that there is a lack of availability of IEC materials for this programme.

SUPERVISORS

A FGD was conducted with 19 supervisors and 6 of them are direct recruits who are graduates. Following are the findings of the discussion with the supervisors:

One supervisor is responsible for 15-20 AWCs and there are few of them who have to manage 25-30 AWCs. Supervisors who has to manage 25-30 AWCs raised the concern that they are not able to visit all the AWC in each month though they plan the travel at the beginning of the month and submit to the CDPO for review. They focus on the weak centres which are located in interior districts or have more number of pregnant women or more anemic children. Most of the times, they are able to visit one AWC only once in a month as they have other meetings to attend to. They review the attendance sheet, registers regularly and guide the AWW who is not capable of filling up correctly. They also visit the gram sabha and vali mandal meetings at the Village. They have to attend to the complaints if there is any and monitor if the AWC is opened timely or not. On the Mamta Divas, the supervisor avoids visiting the AWC as the AWW remains busy with the Mamta Divas activities. They also conducts surprise visit to the AWC and conducts regular follow up of any critical pregnant mother.

They visit those centre where there are number of anaemic children and monitor the activity of the AWW regarding feeding the children. In case the children are not gaining weight, they refer the children to the PHC for check up. Whenever there is a launch of new programme, the supervisor along with AWW conducts meeting with the community members and enrolls them in the programme.

Whenever there is a budget constraint to conduct a programme, they along with AWW will motivate the community to contribute and organize the programme. However they are not able to mobilize funds from the community as the socio economic condition is poor. They mentioned the need for training on SABLA module and how to ensure adolescent participation in the programme. They also suggested about providing vocational training to the girls so that they participate in the activities and also learn some skill for their livelihood. They suggested providing training on local preparation of recipes than the standard ones. They were concerned about the workload with limited salary of the supervisors and the AWW and also concerned about the safety of the girls and self as there is problem of alcoholism and irregular transport facilities.

Ahmedabad District

XXXX village, XXX block

UNICEF in partnership with the Department of women and child development initiated the review of SABLA programme to understand the scope of adolescent participation in the existing programme. The objective is to identify the existing structures of the adolescent participation platforms within the programme, the current scope of participation within the programme and the possible entry points to enhance adolescent participation. Three FGDs were conducted with Adolescent girls, Anganwadi Workers and Anganwadi Supervisors in the Ahmedabad district.

The key findings are summarised below:

Adolescent Girls

Focus group discussions were conducted with 15 adolescent girls with the average age of 15.5 years. Most of the participants were school dropouts after completion of primary education. The participants mentioned that drop out girls take vocational courses such as computers, beautician, tailoring, mehndi, and handicraft. Most of the girls mentioned that any decision about their future is taken by their parents who are not supportive for higher education because of in the village there was no facility after 8th standard education. Though most of the girls expressed their desire to continue studying but their parents refuse to let them attend school outside the village or if there is a choice to make about continuing the education of a boy versus the girl. However, the boys are encouraged to continue their studies and necessary expenditure is made for the same. They also mentioned that parents discuss and takes suggestion from their brothers but doesn't discuss with them. Some of the girls dropped out of school because there was no secondary level school in the village and some didn't want to continue studying. One of the responses was "Shasakat banava mate Bhanvu jaruri che" (It is important to study to become empowered).

Most of the participants considered education to be important in their lives but dropped out of school since there was no secondary school in the village, early marriage (Rabari, Thakoor and devipujak community), poor financial house hold condition and family responsibilities. Hence most of the girls started working in the household and also as agricultural labourer, embedding stones, animal husbandry, working in GIDC, sewing dresses and blouse to earn livelihood. They consider doing jobs to be very important as it would make them independent; help them earn money consequently contributing in household expenses and buy things for self. One of the responses was "*Avk thay tevu koi kam karta shikhiya hoiye to jeevan maa mushkeli na samay ma kaam laage...*" (If we have vocational skills then in future, if any time something goes wrong in our life then it can be helpful...).

An informal discussion with a group (fifteen) of school dropout adolescent girls mentioned that they are not aware of SABLA, Sakhi Saheli and Kishori Samooh and came for the discussion for the first time. The major reasons for dropping out of school were poor financial condition, mother's illness, taking care of younger siblings and failure in the studies. "*Gharnu kam ane bhanvanu banne satheto kevi rite thay ben?*"

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION:

While attending school, the girls, had participated in activities like 'mehndi', rangoli competition etc. Currently, in the AWC, activities on p they attend the celebration of the cultural programmes, Independence Day, Mamta diwas, mobilising girls and distributing snacks amongst the attendees when informed. This indicates the lack of available platforms which supports the participation of the adolescents at the community level. Even at the Anganwadi, the participation scope is limited to only celebration of specific activities or assisting the AWC in completion on particular activity. The adolescents participation is very limited as the school drop out girls are already engaged in jobs, resistance from the parents as they are unaware of the importance of the activities and the impact of the activities in the lives of the girls.

MOBILITY:

The girls visit the workplace in groups or with their parents to the field and are not allowed to more alone freely. During leisure the girls help their mothers in the household chores, visit their friends or visit the AWC in their village in groups and are not allowed to go alone as they say "*(Jamano Kharab che)*". Most of the times they are accompanied by their mother, brothers or some elder people if it is late in night. Most of the girls realises that they will get information and learn new things if they get to visit to places - *Bahar Javathi badhi samaj pade.*

CHANGES DURING ADOLESCENCE:

Adolescent's girls were aware about menstruation and the changes that occur during that age and discussed the same with their friends, elder sisters, AWW, ASHA and ANM. They are not comfortable discussing any issue with their mothers and confided with friends. They don't discuss their menstrual related problems with the AWW immediately as they are concerned about the perception that the AWW might develop about them. However, when the problems persist they discuss the problem with the AWW who takes them to the ANM at the PHC for necessary treatment. They don't visit the PHC on their own and are also not aware of any adolescent's friendly services. They received information related to reproductive health like condoms, HIV/AIDS, sanitary napkins from television, print ads and posters.

They mentioned that the AWWs taught them about menstrual hygiene and are aware about sanitary napkins. But they don't use sanitary napkins as they are costly and have problems with disposal of the napkins. One of the girls mentioned "*ahiha ame kapda vapri ae chiye amne napkin ni samaj che pan mongha pade che ane teno nikal krvama pan taklif pade che...*".

AWARENESS ABOUT AWCs AND SABLA:

The discussions with the girls revealed that the girls are not regularly attending the AWC activities as they visit the centre only once or twice a month to participate in celebrations such as Mamta din. The participants were aware about the activities of the AWC but not about SABLA programme and the activities related to the same. Irregular participation from the adolescent's girls is a challenge to the successful implementation of the SABLA programme. The primary interest to visit the AWC was to collect the food packets or the tiffin which is served to them.

Few of the girls were aware of Sakhi and Sahelis and they mentioned they have discussion on anaemia, menstrual problem, personal hygiene, domestic violence in the AWC and they provide the same information to other girls. Sakhi and Sahelis discuss issues with the AWW and at times with the supervisors.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE PROGRAM:

Since of the girls visit the AWC only once in a month, they proposed to have the activities twice in a month. To ensure participation of both younger as well as older girls who are either working or studying, the meeting should be organised on holiday or Sunday. The participants suggested that it would be helpful to conduct meetings with the parents particularly mothers so that they are aware of the adolescent focused activities at the AWC and the objective of the same. This would reduce the resistance from the parents towards participating in the AWC activities.

They also suggested organising vocational training courses on mehndi, tailoring, embroidery, computer, beauty parlour, English class with an established linkage to the market which would help them to earn. They would learn the skills, earn money, contribute to household income and become self reliant and empowered. Along with vocational skills, they would like to know about different government schemes for adolescent girls and on savings schemes. They proposed a regular visit from outside agencies/ external people like the team to discuss with them about the existing problems and the solution. Exposure visits/learning visits to other places with AWW would help them to learn from others. They suggested use of charts, posters, films as a medium of providing information which is easily understandable.

ADOLESCENT INVOLVEMENT TO AUGMENT PARTICIPATION:

There was absence of feedback mechanism as they never gave feedback on any of the issues to the AWC or to any other service provider. However, they reported that they could inform the AWW regarding what they wanted to learn or know more about. Only two of the participants amongst the group were aware about the sakhi and saheli but mentioned that the roles were not well defined and didn't consider their contribution to be concrete. When asked most of the girls also expressed their desire to become Sakhi or Saheli. They also mentioned that the activities in the AWC should be planned and the agenda should be shared with all the girls so that they are well informed and can participate.

Most of the out of school girls were aware of the AWC and the activities but were reluctant in regularly visiting the centre. The primary reason for their irregular participation is due to their engagement as semi skilled workers. The challenge is to ensure active participation of all out of school girls on a sustained basis.

The group felt that they should be given the opportunity to participate in block level/district level meetings so that they get more information. In the village, there should be a training centre which would conduct capacity building for the adolescent girls. They mentioned that they would like to discuss about child marriage, freedom for girls, gender equity and education to the higher authorities. They also mentioned that these issues should be discussed with adolescent boys from the community so that they are also aware of the disadvantages of child marriage, advantages of family planning method, sexual health etc, and adverse health effects due to alcohol and tobacco addiction.

ANGANWADI WORKERS

The FGD was conducted with 15 AWWs and the respondents had an average experience of 10 years. All the AWWs resided in the same village where the centre is located.

TRACKING AND INCLUSION OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS:

AWWs mentioned that they conduct regular home visits and have a survey and attendance register of both school going and out of school girls which is updated regularly. The AWWs maintain 4 registers, which are checked by the supervisors. Supervisors accompany the AWW for home visits to those who don't attend the meeting regularly and also attends Saturday meetings. They did mention about taking help of adolescents in identification of their peers in the community. They raised the concern that though they identify 30 to 35 adolescents approximately in a centre, only 30 to 40% attends the SABLA Programme. There are only 15 - 20 school going girls and others are school drop outs engaged as semi skilled labourers in GIDC and they earn around Rs 200 per day. This is one of the primary reasons for irregular attendance during SABLA programme as most of the families don't send their girls to AWC because girls go out for work as labourers and does household chores and attending the programme at AWC would lead to loss of wages. There was a special mention about Thakoor Community where most of the parents are illiterate, they don't understand the importance of sending the girls to the AWC and hence it is very difficult to include the girls from that community.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SABLA

The participants mentioned that most of the adolescent girls come at Anganwadi Centre on every Friday as they get nutritious food packets on that day. The girls visits the AWC during a meeting where information on various topics such as nutrition, changes during adolescence, menstruation, nutritious recipe making, etc. are provided. Some of the adolescent's girls also participate in "Mamta Divas", celebration of all festivals and Independence Day/Republic Day, rallies, etc. AWWs have organised exposure visits to police station, dairy, bank, post office for the girls. Mamta Taruni divas, is celebrated once in every quarter when the girls are weighed, Hb and BMI tests are done which in done in collaboration with the ANM.

AWWs reported about formation of sakhi-saheli, i.e. Kishori Samoohs and these groups primarily meet those girls who are irregular in attending program. They also help the AWW in organizing the Friday meetings or any other celebrations. However, no separate meeting of the Sakhis and Sahelis were conducted as the roles nor responsibilities are not well outlined. There exists the lack of clarity about the process of formation of the Samoohas and the role of sakhi and saheli.

As per the SABLA guideline, the budgetary provisions for providing nutritious food, for conducting exposure visits and the AWW has to contribute to conduct the activities. The AWWs mentioned about "lok falo" (people's contribution) from the community members (Desai community/Rabari) and

utilised the pool fund for procuring furniture, wall painting, building compound wall, provide food during celebration like Raksha Bandhan, Independence day, Diwali and giving rewards during competition.

TRAININGS AND BCC:

During the initiation of the programme, some of the AWWs received single training on SABLA; hence there is a need to have refresher training on complete SABLA module. They expressed the need for training on program implementation, record management, interactive and thematic activity planning and communication skills with adolescents. They need training on counselling so that they can counsel the adolescents and their parents about the importance of SABLA. The emphasis was on the need of training which would build their capacity in increasing the participation of the adolescents in the programme. They identified the need for the availability of the IEC materials (poster, books and audio visual medium) on adolescents to make their interaction easy and effective.

Need for an increased budget allocation was mentioned and to have particular provisions of providing snacks/refreshments to adolescent girls during weekly meetings. Need for support to initiate vocational training programs for adolescents at the Centre such as tailoring, beautician, computers, etc was mentioned. AWWs suggested the provision for inviting resource persons/speakers for meeting to talk to the adolescent girls on different issues as per the need of the group e.g. career counselling, health, nutrition, etc which would increase their participation.

INCREASED ADOLESCENT PARTICIPATION:

AWWs mentioned that the adolescent's girls are very friendly with them and they share their problems with the AWWs but when there is a meeting on SABLA, their participation is less as they are not interested in only receiving information.

AWWs mentioned that the adolescent girls who are irregular are later contacted and given relevant services. Respondents believe that the SABLA Programme is very effective and important but because of work load resulting to time constraint, they are not able to put focus on the activities of the programme and listen to all the issues that the girls bring up. They suggested to conduct SABLA related activities on one particular day in the week which would be entirely for adolescent and will be thematic in nature. They suggested initiating sewing, handicraft work, and embroidery classes in the AWC which would increase participation from the adolescents as they would visit the centre to learn these skills. While they come for these classes, information on health and other issues can be provided to them.

SUPERVISORS

The FGD was conducted with a group of 10 supervisors and below mentioned are the findings:

The main role and responsibility of the supervisors is to implement, monitor and evaluate the AWC. Each supervisor covers 20 to 25 centres and they visit once in a month generally prioritizing the weak centres. During their visit they check the registers, number of children present and the timings of the AWC etc. Few supervisors attend Gram Panchayat meetings, Vali mandal and conduct 5 home visits in a day. They also attend meeting with the parents of the adolescent girls and pregnant women and motivates to visit the AWC. In the community, the literacy level is very low and hence the education level amongst girls is very less and they are burdened with household chores, animal husbandry and daily wage earners. In Rabari, Thakoor and devipujak community, the child marriage is high and they don't send girls out of their home easily and hence the participation is low. The supervisors mentioned that there is increasing number of divorcee cases in these three communities. If meeting with girls are organised in the village, it might result to significant participation and also trainings can be provided through NGOs to the adolescent girls.

The supervisors didn't receive any training on SABLA module and are unaware of the modules of SABLA. They accepted that although sakhi – saheli samooahas are formed but they don't function as desired. However they mentioned that the groups are difficult to maintain as they are not very active because of not having IEC materials and time constraint. The most difficult group to reach are the out-of school adolescents as they are engaged as daily wage workers.

Supervisors mentioned that along with AWWs they need specific training on reporting format, management of budget, communication skill and activity planning along with availability of charts, posters, TV, computer, through which they can discuss adolescent issues and make learning enjoyable and interesting. Pamphlets, booklets should be available in the AWC and should be available for distribution to the adolescent's girls.

The group agreed that the participation of adolescents in higher forums and discussing their needs would help the programme. They mentioned SABLA to be a very good program which focuses on adolescents but due to work load and time constraint, they are not able to put focus on this programme particularly interacting with adolescents. There voiced the need of additional manpower to manage the SABLA activities and suggested involving and assigning responsibilities to other departments for the SABLA programme outcome.

8.Key observations /highlights from district discussions

	Adolescent girls	AWW	Supervisors
Education and School drop outs	<p>Most of the girls have completed primary education and have dropped out of school while few of them are still studying. The primary reason for dropping out was mentioned to be non availability of higher education facility in the village, poor household financial condition, the families think it is not important to study further, household responsibilities, failure in school exams etc.</p> <p>Most of the girls get involved in 'Mehndi' classes, Tailoring, Embroidery, Beauty Parlour, or as daily wage laborers after dropping out of school.</p>	<p>Difficult to engage the school dropout girls regularly as they are engaged as daily wage earners or as agricultural laborers. In some cases, the families don't allow them to access the AWC. The school going girls are bus with school, tuition, household chores and hence are not very regular.</p>	<p>Most difficult to reach were the out-of school adolescents as they would be engaged as daily wage earners in GIDC, or chickoo farms during season, as labourers and almost 20% girls are engaged in manual labour.</p>
Aspiration	<p>The participants considered education to be very important as it would make them independent, help them earn money through jobs, consequently they would be able to contribute in household expenses and buy things.</p>	<p>The families feel that the girls should learn any vocational work which would help them in earning money rather than completing their education as they will get married.</p>	
Adolescent changes	<p>Girls were aware about menstruation and the changes that occur during adolescence and the primary source of information was their sisters and the AWW.</p> <p>They were comfortable discussing these issues with AWWs, Friends, elder sisters and ANMs.</p>	<p>Girls are aware about menstruation and other changes and discuss any healthrelated problems with the AWW. Also discusses issues related to eve teasing, domestic violence with the AWW.</p>	

issues	Adolescent girls	AWW	Supervisors
Gender Disparity	The girls reported about gender disparity which exists in their families as they felt that the boys were allowed to study as much as they wanted and had easy access to education.		
Anganwadi Centre	Most of them visit the Anganwadi Centre on a fixed day, i.e. Mamta din, once a month when the adolescent girls are mobilized. They receive nutritious snack packets and information pertaining to health, menstruation, changes during adolescence, learning to prepare recipes from nutritious snacks, their height and weight were measured, IFA was given, etc.	Once every quarter "Mamta Taruni divas" is celebrated wherein the girls were weighed, Hb & BMI measured in collaboration with the ANM. Adolescents are comfortable in discussing any health related issues with them.	Supervisors generally prioritize AWCs for their visit based on the no of malnourished children, less attendance of adolescent girls, no of pregnant women, new AWC staff or if the AWC has been left out during last month.
Knowledge about SABLA	Most of the girls are not aware of the SABLA scheme and only in Kutchh the girls received 'SABLA pothi' only few days before the discussion. The Sakhi - Sahelis groups were not consistent and the girls as well as the AWW were not very clear about the responsibilities of the Sakhi and Sahelis.	Limited knowledge regarding SABLA scheme. Voiced the need for capacity building on SABLA module, activity planning, communication skill etc. Aware about sakhi-saheli, i.e. Kishori samoohs but lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities and also the formation of the samoohas.	They accepted that although sakhi – saheli groups have been formed but the samoohas need training. Difficult to maintain the Sakhi – Saheli groups as they are not very active due to time constraint and unwillingness. Also the girls are out of the program as they turn 19 and again new leader needs to be appointed leading to operational difficulties.

Issues	Adolescent girls	AWW	Supervisors
Issues concerning them	They mentioned that if provided an opportunity they would like to discuss about cleanliness around the AWC, age of marriage for girls, gender disparity, dowry, female foeticide, child rights, and education for girls at higher forums.	<p>AWWs could recollect receiving single training on SABLA at the initiation of the program.</p> <p>Need for training on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • program implementation • record management, • activity planning • Communication skills with adolescents. <p>Need for the availability of the IEC materials on adolescents to make their interaction easy and effective. There was a mention about the requirement of weighing scale as they had to depend on the ANM to bring the same on Mamta din.</p>	<p>The girls are enrolled in the SABLA program but they are not regular in attending SABLA meetings.</p> <p>Need for training on the below mentioned issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of reporting format • Management of budget • Communication skill • Activity planning with adolescents which would be of interest to the group
Feedback mechanism	Absence of feedback mechanism as they never gave feedback on any of the issues to the AWC or to any other service provider.	AWW decides on the activities and inform the girls.	
Available platforms	The girls discussed that there is no other forum besides the AWC or their school where they could get an opportunity to voice their issues and discuss on them.		
Suggestions to augment participation	<p>Meeting with parents so that they are aware about the kind of information provided in the AWC, how these are going to help the girl and then parents would not hesitate to send them to AWC.</p> <p>Provision of vocation trainings,</p>	<p>Adolescents who were engaged as daily wagers or those who were studying and could not attend the meetings. Meeting and training should be organized at village level within the community.</p> <p>Budget allocation for arranging</p>	<p>Availability of charts, posters, TV, Computer, through which they can discuss adolescent issues and make learning enjoyable and interesting.</p> <p>Provision of participation of adolescents in higher forums and</p>

	<p>computer classes, English speaking class which would enable them to earn livelihood through the AWC.</p> <p>Meeting to be organized on Saturday as it best suites the young girls but for school going older girls, it should be organized at different time.</p> <p>Availability and use of charts, posters, films, have a small library with books on Swami Vivekananda & general knowledge books.</p>	<p>competition and activities, for prizes, travel support/stipend to adolescents.</p> <p>Inviting resource persons, for sessions, having a TV in the Centre, computer, etc which would increase adolescent participation.</p> <p>Reduced workload would help in focusing on the adolescents programme.A helper should be there in the AWC to support the AWW.</p> <p>Need for support to initiate vocational training programs for adolescents at the Centre such as tailoring, beautician, computers, etc was mentioned.</p>	<p>discussing their needs.</p> <p>Some of the AWCs are situated in interior areas and there is lack of transport facility which acts as a bottleneck in the supervision.</p> <p>Budget allocation to augment participation through arranging different activities, giving prizes, organizing exposure visits etc.</p> <p>Initiation of vocational training programs for adolescents at the centre such as tailoring, beautician, computers, English speaking classes, etc.</p>
--	---	---	--

