

Project Title: Girl's Education Programme

Period of Reporting: July – September'09

The implementation of project in this period was not that smooth as one of our girls committed suicide, five girls were married while other one ran away, another girl migrated to her relatives place (which we feel is trafficking in the name of migration). As a result our staffs have to do series of meeting with the local stakeholders and parents for the same. Even a series of visit to police station were also conducted.

CORE GROUP MEETING

Three meetings of the core team of girls were organised on the issues related to Child marriage. The average attendance in the meeting was twenty two. The discussion mainly focussed on the effects of early marriage on an adolescent girl and to break the rosy picture which is shown to them to marry them early (mainly that all their problems will be solved after marriage and she will be leading a very happy life after marriage).

These girls have prepared case studies of the incident of child marriage and its effects and have conducted 16 meetings with their peers to let them have a clear picture of the effects of early marriage.

Two girls of the core team have been selected for conducting surveys on the situation of sanitary latrines in the area by the government department. This has boosted up the self confidence of these girls and they now proudly share and aware the rest of the group about the problems related to sanitary latrines and the attitude of the head of the family regarding the same.

HOME VISIT

We have conducted over two thousand home visits in this period. This include frequent visit to 82 families as the girls in these family were problem like fixing of marriage, non- continuing of education or involving girls in work during their study period.

Three girls were sick and our doctors referred them to hospital but their parents were not willing to take her to hospital. They are motivated to take them to hospital.

One girl went to her Mama's (brother of mother) place owing to the frequent quarrels of her parents. The parents were motivated to stop quarrels as these were affecting their daughters.

MOTHERS MEETING

18 mothers meeting have been conducted in the project period where on an average 14 mothers were present. The meeting were mainly focussed on giving importance to unit tests of the girls (ensuring that the girls appear in the test, also reducing their load of household chores at least two days before tests). Apart from that awareness on ill effects of child marriage was conducted.

SCHOOL VISIT

In this period school visit is conducted 11 times. The visit was mainly to update about the attendance and academic performance. Most of the school authorities want us to support the girls of the poorest of the poor families. This request becomes difficult for us to entertain as mostly these girls are from quite far off villages and no new girls are admitted in the programme.

STAKEHOLDERS MEETING / EDUCATION INTERFACE

In this period one stakeholders meeting was conducted. Twenty five stakeholder including block level officials were also present. The Shiksha Karamadhyaksha of Bishnupur Block-1 was also present. The meeting mainly aimed to focus on prevention of child marriage and continue girl education. The block authorities have appreciated the campaign organised by the girls for promotion of hygiene and sanitation awareness in the block.

The meeting also highlighted the sanitary needs of the 95 villages in 11 gram panchayats. There are more than 17 000 sanitary latrines required in these villages. The block authorities are requesting Nishtha to support these needs in not only in the 17 villages but also in the rest of the villages. Presently, Nishtha is trying to manage resources for the same.

TUTOR'S MEETING

Three tutor's meetings were organised in this period. The main issues of discussion in those meetings were the attendance of the girls in the coaching classes, apart from that the time management. The tutors were observing that the children of Class VIII – IX were losing interest towards studies, the tutors mainly felt that adolescent problems had a strong influence for creating such a behaviours. So, tutors wanted to have some counselling skills to overcome such problems.

Also, as these girls were quite interested in watching movies so a suggestion came that we should show movies but mostly the good movies which we are getting are mainly in English and we are searching good informative movies in Bengali.

TUTOR WORKSHOP

Three tutors workshop were conducted by Mr. Samir Ghosh. Two workshops of core tutor team having 14 tutors have been organised by Mrs Ritu Sarawgi. In this period Mr Ghosh visited coaching centres for 11 days and in each day visited nearly 3 – 4 coaching centres.

OTHERS

- 756 girls were distributed 3 dishta notebooks.
- Uniform has been given to 319 girls.
- Tuition fees have been given to 36 tutors in this period of July – September'09.

REPORT OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS

- 21 girls are studying in Class XII those who will appear fro their higher secondary exams in 2010.
- 30 girls are studying in Class XI, so in total 51 girls are supported under this project.
- Tuition fees for 4 months were given for Class XII girls while two months were given for Class XI girls as their session started from May'09.
- All 51 girls are provided with 2 set uniforms.
- Educational materials were purchased for the 51 girls. But the payment will be made in October 2009.
- A state level meeting on Child Marriage and domestic violence was organised where Mrs Malini Bhattacharya, Chairperson of Women's

- Commission were present. Apart from that DSW(district Social welfare Officer), SDO, BDO, Panchayat members, OC of local police, Head Masters of High School etc were present. All officials promised their active support to Nishtha.
- o Three day training was organised during their vacation. The training was mainly focused on communication.
 - o These 40 girls have organised a campaign on child marriage, after selecting 3 villages for 18 days.

It's the result of the initiative of Nishtha and efforts of these girls that there has been a wind of changes in the community. Below mentioned is a case study which depicts the same.

A Case Study that Depicts the Atrocities on a Girl



Jayasree, a bubbly girl of 16 years lives in Kalmikhali village. She lives with her parents and three sisters. Her father is an agriculture labour and barely manages two square meals for the family.

Since childhood Jayasree was keen to study and her dream was to carry out her education at least till Higher Secondary Level (Class XII). Considering the poor economic background of the family and keenness of Jayasree to carry out education, Nishtha supported her education. She was also provided with certain trainings.

Jayasree apart from studying was acting as peer educator. Her responsibility along with other group members was to aware young married women to use contraceptive pills till she attains the age of safe conceiving.

During early this year, the marriage of Jayasree was fixed as the bridegroom was demanding no dowry. Jayasree also agreed to marry when her condition to continue education even after marriage was accepted by the groom.

In the initial period everything was going on smoothly. But one day her husband found contraceptive pills in her bag. Jayasree faced good amount of bashing and her movement was restricted and was given only one meal a day. Jayasree managed to communicate this to her father who took her to his home.

Following this incident, her husband along with in-laws came to her house and narrated whole story in such a manner that it's Jayasree who is at fault. The elderly who always believe that it's the duty of women to obey her husband pressurised Jayasree to go again. Jayasree put the condition to continue education once again which her in-laws accepted.

After two three days of her staying at husband's place, Jayasree wanted to attend school. Her husband then tore her registration certificate of her Class XII in to pieces and again started abusing Jayasree. Jayasree somehow managed to communicate the same to her father with the help of a person living nearby.

Her father then seeks help of panchayat members (local self government). The panchayat then took a decision to let Jayasree live in her father's house for two years till she continue her education and only after she completes her Class XII and is willing to stay with her husband she will go to her husband place.

On day when Jayasree was going to attend school, her husband with the help of two local goons tried to kidnap Jayasree. All the resistance and shouting of Jayasree went in vain and she was locked in a room. From that place Jayasree threw chits of paper writing that she is being kidnapped. A person saw that and informed her father.

Her father again took the help of panchayat who warned Jayasree's husband not to do any such activity in future and took the decision to take a legal divorce once Jayasree become eighteen year old. The panchayat also warned Jayasree's husband that they will seek assistance from police if any such incident happens.

Jayasree also shared her suffering in front of Mrs Malini Bhattacharya, Chairperson of Women's Commission. She has promised all the required legal support to Jayasree.

Presently Jayasree is attending schools. Nishtha is providing her special coaching to make up the gap in between. Her peers are assisting her in getting out of the trauma that she has faced. In coming year Jayasree will appear for her Class XII exams and trying to fulfil her mere dream of continuing education at least till higher secondary level.

It's a matter of great shame that the girls in the developing countries still face such atrocities to fulfil her dreams.