



Introduction

The third module of incremental module series under Safe Childhood Programme is based on education of children aged from 6-14 years. Education at primary and middle school level is an inseparable part of intellectual and mental development which prepares them for educational and societal challenges during adolescence and youth.

Session Objectives

By the end of the session participants will:

- Know what all steps are important to be taken for ensuring education of children at primary and middle school level and how registration of more number of children can be ensured
- Be able to motivate families, communities and teachers so that schools can have higher students retention rate and they are at least able to complete education up to the middle level
- Will be able to take necessary measures to stop corporal punishment in schools and homes in cooperation with village education samiti
- Will be able to analyse and take necessary steps in improving level of education in schools as well as ensuring fundamental facilities such as separate toilets for girls in schools, sports facilities, maintenance and upkeep of school building

Session Process

Step 1

Begin the session by welcoming all the participants and thank them for participating in it. Introduce yourself and ask them to introduce themselves. Start the session with a motivational song such as 'chal pade hain le mashalien log mere gaon ke..... or ' hum honge kamyab... !"

Step 2

Discuss with participants the steps to ensure quality and impartial education for children at primary and middle schools:

- Ensuring registration of all boys and girls aged 6-14 years in schools
- Ensuring that similar treatment/behaviour is meted out to all children in schools irrespective of whichever religion, caste, sex or group they may be from
- Providing support in preparation of school development plan and analysing it
- Constitution of school management committees in all schools of the village(s). Calling their meetings at fixed intervals and ensuring that these meetings are organised efficiently
- Making parents-teachers associations work efficiently and participate in their meetings if required
- Making arrangements for working separate toilets for girls and motivating girls to use them
- Ensuring management and distribution of mid-day meals in all schools and assessing their quality periodically and also ensuring that all children eat together without any kind of discrimination
- Ensuring that any disabled, HIV/AIDS affected children remain in mainstream and discriminatory or mocking behaviour is directed at them
- Giving special focus on education of children who have been rescued from child labour or have history with law enforcing agencies by getting them admission in classes suitable to their age
- Ensuring that teachers do not give any kind of corporal punishment to children. Making parents and teachers aware about the same.



Step 3



Tell the participants that even though responsibility of teaching the children at school lies with the teachers, however, if they keep close watch on management and running of the school, improvements can be made in the quality of education. In addition making parents and community aware and motivating them about educating their children is also necessary. For example, if there is no atmosphere of studies in the family and the children are made to work at home or fields, their education will be affected. If due to any reason, a child falls in bad company or gets addicted to drinking and is looked down upon by parents, the child can lack behind in studies. Also, share with them that it is important to establish contact and coordination between panchayat, school management

committee and block officials in order to ensure education standards for children and also organising meetings at the schools and organising functions in the community. Tell the participants that they can take support from village education samiti, community and families also for the same. Panchayat members can even involve village elders during village meetings to create awareness related to education of the children. In case any incident of misbehaviour, discrimination or corporal punishment comes to light, it should be discussed in village meetings involving all stakeholders (panchayat members, teachers, parents, village elders and important community leaders) as to how positive change can be made to stop such incidents. If possible, panchayat members, community members, school management committee and stakeholders can attempt to make monitoring tools, which can monitor education of children at schools and homes.

Ask the participants to imagine following three incidents affecting the education of children, which have occurred in their village

Incident 1

Rani's children Raghav and Gauri attend village school. Raghav studies in class 5th and Gauri is in class 3. They belong to Scheduled Caste. One day both of them returned back crying. On being asked by their mother, they informed that other children from higher castes do not let them sit in the front in class and if by chance they sit in front, they are pushed back. Even teachers do not stop those children. If they ask any question related to the studies, they are asked to keep quiet. Both of them informed that this has been going on for many days but that day they had to face another insult. They shared that while mid-day meal was being served, they were separated from the main queue and made to sit separately. While continuously crying, they shared that they could not face this humiliation and got up without having meals.

Rani was a wise woman and was aware that only panchayat members can do something in this regard. She went to panchayat member Mohan Lal along with both her children and narrated the whole incident to him.

Now think over what Mohan Lal should do?

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Incident 2

Ranveer, who is 12 years old studying in class 6th, is the son of a farm labourer. He is a habitual drinker and a very strict man. Ranveer used to stand first in his class earlier, but has been trailing in studies for over a year. The reason was that as soon as he would return from school, his father would send him to work in the fields. He would say, "See, I am getting old, now you only will work in fields. After all even after studying, you have to become farm labourer like me only." He would send Ranveer to work despite opposition from his mother and would even slap Ranveer in case he would resist going. How much could 12-year-old poor Ranveer work!! But he had little choice in front of his father's adamant attitude. The matter that Ranveer is trailing in studies also reached members of school education samiti through his teachers.

One day after returning from school when Ranveer was working in the fields, village sarpanch Kathauti Ram Ji saw him and immediately understood the matter.

Now think over, how Kathauti Ram Ji can remove hurdles in educating Ranveer?

Incident 3

Satara Devi's son Mahesh had been avoiding school. He would become pale merely on hearing about going to school. At times he would say, 'I am not feeling well', other times he would say, 'today is holiday'. He would often lie in order to avoid going to school. Satara Devi could not understand the sudden change in her son's attitude and reason for the same. She would wonder what had happened to the child who was so fond of going to school. Mahesh would not open up or give any reason despite being asked many times. One day when Satara Devi and her husband forced him to open up, Mahesh broke down and shared that new teacher has come to school. He beats children with a stick if they are not able to give answers in the class. Mahesh informed that he beats even other children in similar manner and makes children stand outside in the sun for hours together. Therefore he does not feel like going to school.

Satara Devi and her husband met parents of other children and they also shared similar incidents. Then all the parents met members of village panchayat and school head master to complain about the new teacher.

Now think what action school headmaster and members of panchayat took in this matter?

Step 4

Now ask the participants what answers they would give to the questions asked at the end of each incident mentioned above. Ask them to identify problems behind the three incidents. Support them in giving answers and give clarity in case any answer is not clear. Summarise the answers.

Step 5

- Points to be kept in mind by the participants (show the points below on a chart)
- Panchayat members should know the number of children who are not attending school and their reasons for not attending
- They should take steps to ensure more and more children are registered in school and must also make sure that girls should also be registered
- Panchayat members should communicate and spread word about plans and initiatives related to school children such as scholarships, competitions etc
- Finding reasons for not attending school from families of such children and motivating their families and taking necessary steps in consultation with school administration
- Taking necessary steps in getting those children admitted to school who had been involved in child labour earlier
- They should keep watch to monitor if there are any cases of discrimination in village schools towards children from weaker sections, disabled and HIV/AIDS affected children
- If required, panchayat members should intervene in school functioning and if necessary seek help from education department
- Panchayat members should hold meetings with the community and also through village samiti to get information on problems faced by school children

- Panchayat members should also ensure that village children do not face any problems while in school
- They should ensure that families do not cause hindrance in education of children

In addition, ask the participants to discuss on these points and seek their opinion on how far they agree with these. Motivate them to add left out points

Village panchayat must organise sports activities and competitions in cooperation with teachers in order to motivate the children and make them confident so that they can later contribute positively in village upliftment

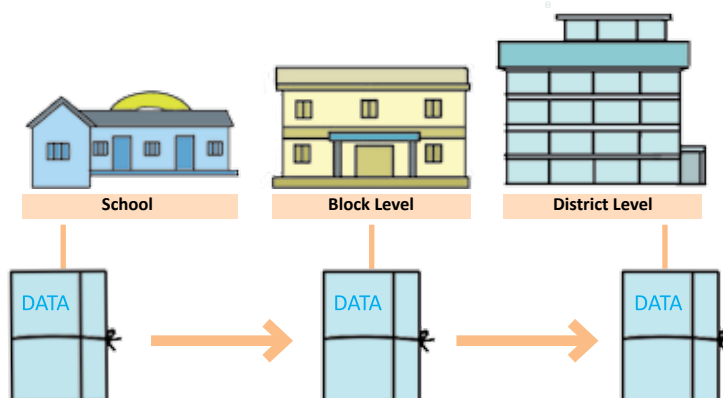
Step 6

Monitoring and data collection process

Inform the participants that data related to education of children is collected at the village level. Even though educating children is the role of teachers, panchayat members can play a very important role in this. They can get necessary information from the school and support in sending the data to upper levels such as block, district etc.

Indicators for getting data related to education of children between 6-14 years

- Number of children(boys/girls) registered at schools
- Number of children not attending school
- Number of children who have completed education up to primary level
- Number of children who have completed education up to middle level
- Number of children who have dropped out of primary and middle schools
- Number of children who have continued schooling
- Number of children who have been discriminated due to HIV/ AIDS, disability or casteism
- Number of children who have benefitted from various schemes such as scholarships etc
- Number of play grounds or open areas which are safe for village children to play



Summarise the discussion as below:

All indicators mentioned above reflect education status of children studying at primary and middle level and reflect their mental and physical health status. Therefore it is important that the data is collected correctly and recorded.

As you are aware, data collected at the village level is shared at block, district , state and finally at national level. Village panchayat and panchayat members can also develop a monitoring tool based on these figures and keep an eye on education of children in the village. Additionally, panchayat members can also set up mechanism to monitor basic facilities in the schools. They can make use of indicators available with DISI to categorise each school so that village can be made child friendly as per Safe Childhood Programme.

Repeat the key learnings of the session before closing it.

Notes:

