



Introduction

The main idea behind the fifth module of the Safe Childhood Programme series is that gender based issues impact development of children deeply. Gender related equality has been the core of United Nations and UNICEF activities. In the Indian context gender based discrimination is a matter of concern for development professionals even today. Gender equality is a basic human right which cannot be denied to children.

Session Objectives

At the end of the session, participants will know:

- The meaning of gender equality and gender discrimination to village community
- About gender based discrimination amongst children, specially girls
- That girls also have equal rights for education, health and nutrition and what steps panchayat members can take at the village level in ensuring these rights of the girls
- What initiatives are required to be taken to make village people aware about gender based discrimination faced by girls at family and community level
- That gender based discrimination starts even before the child is born

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 'Beti Bachao ... song.'

Beti bachao geet

Beti hai jag ka aadhaar
Jab ma hi jag mein na hogi
To tum janm kisse payoge..
Jab behan na hogi ghar angan mein
To kis se roothoge, kisse manaoge

Jab dadi- nani na hogi
To tumhe kahani kaun sunayega
Jab koi swapan sundri hi na hogi
To tum kis se byah rachaoge

Jab ghar mein beti na hogi
To tum kis par laad lutaoge
Jis duniya mein stree na hogi
Us duniya mein tum kaise reh payoge
Naari ke bin jag soona hai
Tum ye baat kab samajh payoge



Step 2

Discuss with participants that to achieve gender equality at village level, following important steps can be taken:

- To ensure that family gets children, especially girls registered at AWC and all children should get supplementary nutritional diet equally and fairly
- Special attention needs to be given to registration of girls between 6-14 years of age at primary and middle schools
- Any incident of female foeticide should be immediately reported to related law enforcing agencies to stop them and also making the village community aware about female foeticide
- In case any case of killing of girl child comes to light, it should be immediately reported to police and related officials
- In case information is received about any family who is denying education to their girl, panchayat members should intervene and also contact school authorities and get the child admitted to school
- Encourage and motivate parents to send their girls to school
- Data related to birth, education, skills etc for boys and girls should be collected and included for village development schemes



Tell the participants that they should ensure that all of the above tasks are carried out.

Step 3

Share the following information with the participants:

As you are aware that gender equality is a basic human right, therefore many countries of the world are making efforts to bring gender equality, under leadership of United Nations. Even though the world has progressed in the field of gender equality, still many developing countries (as per UN data, only 2/3rd of developing countries have achieved gender equality only at primary education level. In India, registration of girls in primary and middle schools is still less: there are only 919 girls against 1000 boys in age group of 0-6 years and female literacy is less than 50%.

Many females are killed even before they are born, many infant girls are killed after birth in India. In many villages, girls are killed and are not given supplementary nutritional diet. The families deny girls education. In addition, girls are considered a burden at home and families. Not only they lend a helping hand to their mothers in household work but also have the responsibility of taking care of their brothers.

Girls are often not given any information on issues which are important for them to know such as: till what class they will study, when will they get married etc. The men in the family take all these decisions. It means that girls have no participation in decisions pertaining to their lives.

Distribute leaflet with details of two such incidents to the participants where girls have undergone discrimination on the basis of gender. If participants desire, it can be read aloud.

Case Study 1

Kamla's fight for her daughter

Kamla has two children - Radha and Rakesh. Rakesh is older to Radha. After completing middle level schooling, Kamla's husband got Rakesh admitted in a school at a little distance from the village. But when Radha finished her middle school, Kamla's husband made her discontinue her studies and told his wife, "our daughter is now growing up. What will she do after studying further? Now she should help you in household chores. If she doesn't learn household work, what will her in-laws say?" Kamla was however, not in agreement with her husband.

She was aware of discrimination being meted out to girls as she herself had faced similar discrimination when she was studying. Her parents had made her discontinue studies while her brothers were well educated.

"See, my husband is stopping my daughter from studying further," she directly reached and told the village sarpanch.

"He wants that Radha should learn household work and then she should be married off."



Panchayat members then advised Ramesh, "cooking and cleaning is not the job of girls alone, they also have right to education. If you can make your sons educated, why not daughters?" Ramesh - "What will she do after studying? It's not that I think that after marriage she has to do household work only."

Panchayat members explained to him, “if you educate your daughter, she will have full development and be worldly wise. Look at your wife, despite being less educated, she is aware. Therefore, do not discriminate with your daughter. Educate her also.” After lot of persuasion, Ramesh understood view point of panchayat members. He gave assurance to his wife that not only will he get their daughter admitted in high school but will also buy her a bicycle so that she can commute easily.

Case Study 2

Aradhana’s fight against discrimination

Aradhana was issue less - this was her mother-in-law’s point of view. Even though Aradhana had two daughters, her mother-in-law believed that till the time a son was not born, a lady’s life is worthless.



Third time Aradhana was pregnant again. Her mother-in-law desired that Aradhana should give birth to a son and not a daughter. The old woman with backward thinking did not know that girls also have as much right to be born as boys. She told Aradhana that she should undergo check-up from a doctor to know whether she is carrying a boy or a girl. She even called up one doctor.

Aradhana did not want to undergo the test to know whether she was carrying a boy or girl in her womb. She was feeling uncomfortable and approached panchayat member Manohari Devi for help. While the mother-in-law called the doctor on pretext of being unwell, Aradhana called Manohari Devi.

Lets see what happened thereafter:

Doctor (to mother-inlaw): Did you call me?

Mother-in-law: Yes, I want to know whether my daughter-in-law is carrying a boy or a girl.

Doctor: This is against the law. I cannot do this.

Mother-in-law: But I know, many people in the village get this done.

Manohari Devi: Doctor is absolutely right. It is against the law to find out if a lady is carrying a boy or a girl in her womb. Rather I will say, whether it is a boy or girl, how does it matter? Girls are also human like boys. Why discriminate against them?

Mother-in-law: I wanted Aradhana to bear a son so that our lineage goes on. . . .

Manohari Devi: If you attempt to kill the female foetus, it will be considered a crime and police can arrest you. And also, share with me details of other families also who have undergone sex determination. Panchayat will take necessary steps in this matter.

Mother-in-law: I got to know for the first time that sex determination is an offence. She told Aradhana, “ Its fine, now I do not want sex determination of your child. I do not want to be guilty of killing a daughter.”

When participants have finished reading or listening to both the case studies, ask them to list out the issues, which have been raised in them. Divide them into two groups and ask each group to work on one of the case studies. Ask the participants to also list out the role played by panchayat members.

Step 4

Points to be kept in mind by participants (list out the points on a chart and display)

- Panchayat members should know the status of enrollment of girls in primary and middle schools. Are there any girls in the village between 6-14 years of age whose parents are not sending them to school?
- Panchayat members should also know the status of registration of girls at the anganwadi centre, whether they are getting supplementary nutritional diet regularly? Inspection should be carried out on the same from time to time.
- Panchayat members should also discuss matters related to gender based discrimination and make efforts to make community members aware of the same and also motivate people to report/bring to light matters of gender based discrimination.
- Panchayat members should maintain constant touch with bal panchayat and should also ensure that bal panchayat should have sufficient representation of girls. In addition, they should encourage participation of girls during their meetings with bal panchayat.
- Panchayat members should also keep an eye on how many girls are born in the village, whether all of them go to school, how many of them complete their education and contribute towards progress of the village.
- They should have regular consultations with village ANM and ASHAs to get information whether all village girls are getting due and equal health care or whether there are any such families who do not pay attention towards the health of their daughters
- They should also consider safety aspect of girls going to schools in other villages, as many families do not send their daughters to school owing to distance and lack of safety for girls. Panchayat should take necessary steps in this matter.
- Panchayat members should intervene if any family in the village tries to get their daughter married before 18 years of age and stop the marriage. They should make efforts to make the villagers aware from time to time and discuss measures to stop child marriages.



Step 5

Monitoring mechanism and data collection

Inform the participants that figures related to gender related issues are prepared at the village level. Some of the figures can be collected directly and can be used by panchayat members to monitor the status of gender equality in the village.

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Discuss above issues with participants and ask whether they agree with them. Motivate them to add any left out points
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Figures related to following indicators can be helpful. Write them on a chart and display:

- Incidents related to female foeticide
- Sex ratio for 0-6 years age group
- Sex for 6-14 years age group
- Percentage of enrollment of girls at primary and middle schools
- Number of girls getting supplementary nutritional diet from AWC
- Infant Mortality Rate (separate for boys and girls)
- Child Mortality Rate (separate for boys and girls)
- Malnourished rate (separate for boys and girls)
- Number of girls married before legal marriage age

These figures provide a monitoring mechanism to panchayats for keeping an eye on gender-based discrimination in the village. These can help in making villages free from gender-based discrimination under Safe Childhood Programme.

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Ask the participants if these indicators are correct with objective of knowing status of gender based discrimination. Discuss and ask if they would like to add or delete any point
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Thereafter summarise the discussion as below:

Above indicators show status of gender related situation in the village. Some of these figures are collected at sub centre level, some from education department or school level, and some can be collected by panchayat at their own level.

Repeat the key messages and close the session by thanking the participants.

