Addressing Gender Issues in the Curriculum

Learnings from the Adolescence Education Program

The Realities of Youth in India Today

• India has 240 million adolescents (ages 10-19)

(RGI Population Projections)

•**Enrollment in Schools**
   ❑ *Classes 6-12 (ages 11-17): 107.6 million*

(MHRD School Statistics, 2009-10)

•**Gross Enrollment Ratio**
   ❑ *81.5% for Class 6-8*
   ❑ *62.7% for Class 9-10*
   ❑ *35.9% for Class 11-12*

(MHRD School Statistics, 2009-10)
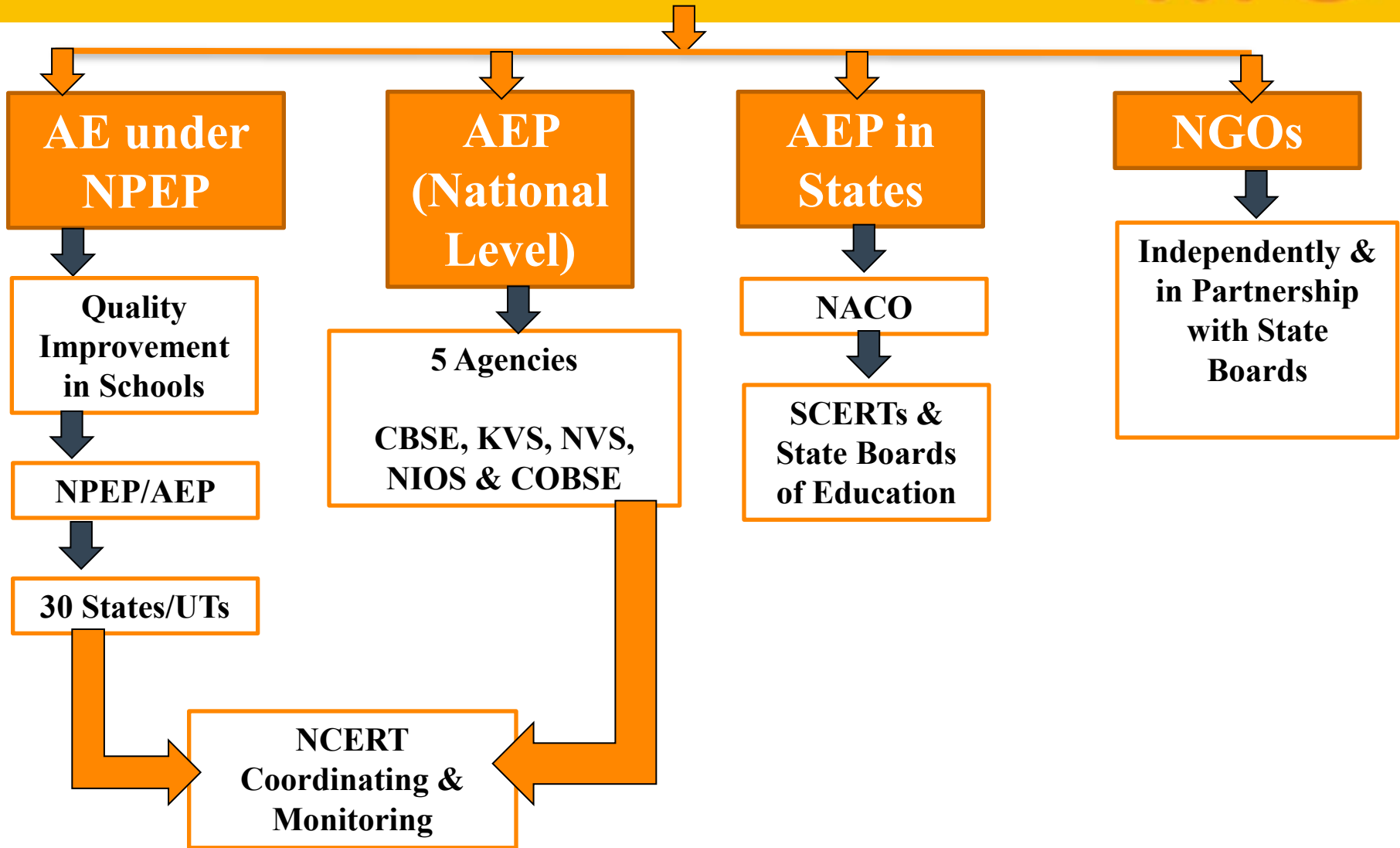
The Realities of Youth in India Today

- Eighty three percent young men and 78% young women in the age group 15-24 expressed that they perceived family life or sex education to be important *(IIPS: Pop Council Youth survey, 2006-07)*

- Fifteen percent young women and men (ages 15-24) reported that that they had received formal family life or sex education *(IIPS: Pop Council Youth survey, 2006-07)*

- Young people (45% boys and 27% girls) voted for teacher as the most appropriate person to transact family life or sex education *(IIPS: Pop Council Youth survey, 2006-07)*

Goal of Adolescence Education

To empower young people with accurate, age appropriate and culturally relevant information, promote healthy attitudes and develop skills to enable them to respond to real life situations in positive and responsible ways

Guiding Principles

- Recognize adolescents as a positive and valuable resource that needs to be respected, appreciated and accepted as such *rather than a problem*

- Realize the transformational potential of education based on principles of equity and social justice *rather than coping and managing paradigm or a status-quo orientation*

- The educational program should be participatory, process-oriented and non-judgmental, *not prescriptive, stigmatizing or fear inducing*

- Should enable adolescents to understand and negotiate existing and constantly changing lived realities

Themes

• Understanding Changes during Adolescence and Being Comfortable with Them (including differences in the process of maturation and their effects on body image)

• Establishing and Maintaining Positive and Responsible Relationships

• Understanding and Challenging Stereotypes and Discrimination Related to Gender and Sexuality

• Understanding and Reporting Abuse and Violation

• Prevention of HIV/AIDS: Prevention, Vulnerability, Dealing with Stigma, Access to Services, Linkages with RTIs/STIs

• Prevention of Substance Misuse: Causes, Access to safety net (protection from substance misuse), Consequences, De-addiction, Care and Support

AEP Partnerships for Reaching Young People in Educational Institutions

UNFPA

AE under NPEP

- Quality Improvement in Schools
- NPEP/AEP
- 30 States/UTs

AEP (National Level)

5 Agencies

CBSE, KVS, NVS, NIOS & COBSE

AEP in States

- NACO
- SCERTs & State Boards of Education

NGOs

Independently & in Partnership with State Boards

NCERT Coordinating & Monitoring

Key Learnings

Learnings from <u>Advocacy</u> Efforts

From battling the odds to creating a positive climate

- Post 2005, ban on the program in selected states

- Some curricula reduced to 'abstinence only'

Recovery through strategic advocacy

- Positioning AE in the context of enhancing life skills to enable young people to achieve their potential and realize the demographic dividend

- Sustained multi-stakeholder consensus building on importance of responding to young people's concerns and cultural relevance of AE

Capitalize on window of opportunity

• National Curriculum Framework (2005) recommended participatory methodologies that build on learners' experiences and supported revisions in AE

• Buy-in from senior policy makers in the MHRD

• Leadership from NCERT at the national level and SCERT/ State Boards for the state specific projects

• Continuous engagement of schooling systems (adolescents, teachers and principals) , civil society and independent experts led to revisions in
  • Conceptual framework
  • Guiding principles of AEP
  • Curriculum that integrates reproductive and sexual health concerns of young people across all stages of school curriculum

Learnings from <u>Advocacy</u> Efforts

Keep the larger vision in place and aim for steady, sustainable and incremental progress in partnership with the system rather than quick solutions

Current AEP Resource Materials are more progressive from the "abstinence only" curricula, and include:

- Comprehensive discussion on genital hygiene and nocturnal emission

- The concept of sexuality is well explained with emphasis on the fact that there is nothing dirty or shameful about it.

- Need to understand and challenge discrimination underscored

- The issue of gender-based violence dealt in detail to generate discussion on sex selection, child marriage, unintended pregnancy

- 'Question box' activity to facilitate anonymous discussion and findings could provide the evidence for revisions

Learnings from <u>Advocacy</u> Efforts

Keep the larger vision in place and aim for steady, sustainable and incremental progress in partnership with the system rather than quick solutions

Discourse on some components still missing in sufficient depth:

- Discussion on masturbation
- Comprehensive discussion on sexual diversity
- Information on unintended pregnancy and access to contraceptives limited and within the context of marriage

Learnings from **Materials Development**

• *Changing mindset of material developers through*

    o   Demonstration of value enhancement through incorporation of adolescent concerns and participatory methodologies

    o   Exposure to varied opinions and world view of young people

• *Process driven approach of capacity building through continuous engagement*

Module 5: Understanding and Challenging Stereotypes and Discrimination, Activity 3, (pg 80-81)

Case Study

"I was the second girl child born to my mother, and my father did not want me. When I was twenty days old, my mother had to take a decision – either me or her husband. She picked me. When she left her husband's home carrying me and my 7 year-old sister in her hands, she turned around and told her husband, "One day, this girl will make me proud"," says Pooja Chopra wearing the crown of Femina Miss India.

Excerpt from news item: Pooja Chopra: Triumph of the Girl Child! By Gayatri, April 8, 2009. Times of India

Questions for discussion

1. Why do you think the news reporter considers Pooja Chopra's winning the title of Femina Miss India-World a victory for the girl child?

2. Do you think there is preference for sons in our society? Is it a problem? Please provide reasons for your response.

3. What do you understand by the term 'sex selection?' What are its implications?

•Approach both pre-service and in-service teacher training

•Create a critical mass of trained functionaries within the system at all levels

 oInitially used external master trainers to train nodal teachers
 oStarting 2009, focus on creating master trainers within the schooling systems

•One time training versus refresher
 oWeb-based platform for shared learning
 oEncouraging peer learning and exchange among local schools

•Build abilities for transacting learner centric, participatory methodologies

Learnings from <u>Programme Implementation</u>

- *In 2010, the national AEP was consolidated to 5 UNFPA priority states (Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa) to achieve better impact and quality*

- *Established goal of at least one trained teacher for every 150 secondary school students*

- *Actively engage <u>young people</u> at all stages of program design and implementation*

- *Inputs during development of materials*
- *Cadre of Peer facilitators*
- *More organized opportunities of shared learning through regional and national competitions*

• *Strategies for increased acceptance of AEP in the education system*

• Given the focus on scholastic achievement, AEP needs to demonstrate the link between its inputs and improvement in scholastic performance

• More creative use of existing spaces: school assembly, SUPW, PTA meetings, annual events

• Better use of existing learning opportunities: Sample Grammar exercise in NIOS English lessons on use of appropriate form of verbs

Learnings from Program Implementation

UNFPA

Before	After
7 am: Neena went to school	6 am: Grandmother put on the music
8 am: I prepared lunch box for father	6.30 am: All of us did yoga
9 am: Father left for office	7.00 am: Father got us ready for school and mother prepared the lunch box
10 am: Mother washed clothes	
	8.00 am: My sister and I left for school
11 am: I went shopping with mother	
	9.00am: Mother enjoyed a cup of tea as she made the family's monthly budget
2 pm: Neena returned from school	
3 pm: We ate lunch together	2.00 pm: We returned from school and ate lunch
CHALLENGING GENDER STEREOTYPES	5.00 pm: We went out to play
	7.00 pm: We worked on our school assignments and shared the day's activities with our parents

Learnings from **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Well defined monitoring mechanisms

- Establish clear criteria for performance based recognition

- Supportive supervision

- Budget for assessments not only at the end-line but mid-term as well

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Importantly, better instruments/ indicators needed for measuring non-health outcomes that will impact health and well being, such as, agency among girls, attitudes towards sexual harassment, domestic violence

•Undertaken end 2010- early 2011

•Case control study design that assessed program effects in the period 2006-09

•Quantitative data collected from 200 schools
•20,000 students exposed to the program and 2300 students not exposed to the program participated

•1000 teachers and 200 school principals participated

•Qualitative data collected from 15 schools

Key findings from concurrent assessment of AEP

- Students, teachers and principals find AEP a relevant and meaningful educational intervention

- The findings suggest modest program effects in terms of improving knowledge and attitudes on different thematic areas covered under the program.

- Adolescents reported more informed decision making and voted for trying out persuasive communication strategies to convince peers and parents of their viewpoint (suggestive of improved life skills)

- More than three-fourths of adolescents reported positive attitudes on challenging gender stereotypes and girls seem to be spearheading this change

Key Findings from Concurrent Assessment of AEP

- Student-teachers' relationship positively influenced

- Teachers reported that the participatory methods used in AEP have influenced overall teaching

- More effort needed to weed out deep rooted notions, for example, related to justifiable domestic violence against women or sexual abuse

- More attention towards teacher training to facilitate better transaction of sensitive themes in classroom settings

- More focus on advocacy efforts especially with non-believers

Sustainability and Scaling Up

• Ongoing political engagement

• In tandem with the current discourse on educational reforms

• Institutionalization within the education system with long term focus on curricular integration

• Sensitization of officials in the Department of Education at all levels

• Creating a critical mass of trained functionaries within schooling systems: *one time training not sufficient*

• Supportive supervision, monitoring and assessment