



PROJECT REPORT

Empowering Adolescent Girls with Transformational Life Skills

Meghalaya



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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a key tipping point in a girl's life when she stands on the threshold of adulthood. According to Sarah Gordon, adolescence "magnifies the difference between girls and boys, it entrenches norms that disproportionately create negative experiences for girls."

Cultural expectations in many parts of the country, often limit a girl's future to an early marriage and child bearing. These social norms compromise a pivotal moment in a girl's life when she especially needs support to pursue her educational goals and successfully transition to the next stage of adulthood. Supporting adolescent girls' multifaceted needs at these tipping points in their lives by providing them with the necessary skills, resources, and competencies is the key if they are to realize their educational aspirations and lead lives of dignity, choice, and opportunity.

Life skills-based education combines a set of learning experiences for adolescent girls that promote the acquisition of new knowledge and attitudes as well as the skills to change behaviours. Such skills are particularly effective in the context of supportive communities. Gender equality, empowerment and the career enhancement create pathways for adolescent girls to achieve fullest potentials.

RELEVANCE AND BACKGROUND

The Khasi tribe number about 1 million in India's north-eastern state of Meghalaya. Of the total population of Meghalaya, nearly 80% live in rural areas. The Khasi tribe is known for its matrilineal culture. Education is low among Khasi community where education of children rarely progresses past primary level. Though girls have no compulsion of marriage or discontinuation of education, Knowledge and awareness about different career opportunities and remoteness of the villages they reside in, deter them to follow promising career path.

Meghalaya, since 2019, has been implementing the "Smart Village Movement" in the state. Empowering underserved communities in rural India and beyond, by connecting them to open innovation platforms have been the guiding principles of 'Smart Village Movement' (SVM). The SVM in Meghalaya is being implemented with an aim to increase the overall standard of living and quality of life of the rural communities, simultaneously creating economic, social, and environmental value. Meghalaya Basin Development Authority and Meghalaya Institute of Governance (MIG) are the major government stakeholders in the movement. For the piloting of the movement, villages were selected from the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya, which is divided into three blocks: Sohiong, Mawphlang and Laikroh. Education, Agriculture, Healthcare and Household are the four verticals on which the Smart Village Movement will work.

An important component of this work is empowering the young population. Supporting adolescent girls' multifaceted needs at the transitional period by providing them with the necessary skills, resources, and competencies is required and life skill education brings this scope to them.

In order to move towards the goal of smart villages and the goal of empowering adolescent girls in rural areas, Meghalaya Institute of Governance (MIG) in partnership with Humara Bachpan Trust (HBT) and FICCI Ladies Organization (FICCI FLO) has implemented the "Empowering Adolescent Girls with Transformational Certified Life Skills" training program. The program aims to impart life skills training to adolescent girls in the smart villages of the three blocks Sohiong, Mawphlang and Laikroh of East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.

ABOUT IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

MEGHALAYA INSTITUTE OF GOVERNANCE (MIG)

The Meghalaya Institute of Governance (MIG) has been set up as the focal institute in the state of Meghalaya to guide governance reforms in the state of Meghalaya, by bringing together and blending the power of knowledge, technology and people for good governance. Its vision is to explore, share and promote good governance in Meghalaya by assisting the government, private sector, the voluntary sector and the communities in putting good governance into practice. MIG is one among the nodal implementation agencies of SVM acts as a repertoire of best practices in good governance. One of the key aspects of MIG's work is participatory outreach programmes with rural citizens. It is with this thought that efforts are underway to engage young people in various skills, life skills and capacity building measures that will bring about uniformity and help to benchmark their governance activities.

HUMARA BACHPAN TRUST (HBT)

Humara Bachpan Trust (HBT) is a not for profit Pan India organization advocating for safe and healthy living conditions with improved socio-economic status of communities living in poverty. It is led by women, youth and children who identify the issues, prioritize them and propose solutions to address those issues before the appropriate authorities. HBT has reached out to 1,35,000 children (including adolescents), 6150 youth and 75000 women living in poverty across its operational areas since its inception.

HBT as the license partner of Gap Inc.'s "Personal Advancement & Career Enhancement" (P.A.C.E.) program has imparted life skills training to 18,088 adolescent girls in middle level and high schools, junior colleges and communities (urban and rural) of Khorda, Cuttack, Puri, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Jagatsinghpur districts of Odisha and in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.

To instill positive vibe among women under difficult circumstances and to build up their personal and professional skill, GAP Inc.'s P.A.C.E life skill training was provided to 25122 women from the urban and rural pockets of Odisha and Maharastra till date. The women after the training are inculcated with adaptive and positive behavior that enabled them to adopt livelihood enhancing opportunities and address the socio-cultural challenges of their everyday life.

FICCI LADIES ORGANISATION (FLO)

FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO) was established in 1983, as a division of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) which is the apex body of industry and commerce in India. As an All India Organization for women, FLO has 17 Chapters pan India. With over 37 years of experience, FLO has been promoting entrepreneurship and professional excellence among women and girls through workshops, seminars, conferences, training and capacity building programmes etc. The objective of the organization is to encourage and facilitate women and girls to showcase their talents, skills, experiences and energies across sectors and verticals of the economy, for a truly inclusive economic growth trajectory.

ABOUT P.A.C.E. PROGRAM

Gap Inc. has been a pioneer amongst its peers by developing P.A.C.E. ahead of the curve, and by doing so, charting a path for other companies to join the effort in engendering women's advancement. P.A.C.E. stands for 'Personal Advancement & Career Enhancement', a unique globally acclaimed certified life skill enhancement program, as it has been designed to be flexible, adaptable and contextualized for the setting in which it is implemented.

Modules used in the program

P.A.C.E. Life Skill Education program is being imparted through structured modules developed by International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) to bring behavioural changes among the adolescent girls bringing a balance in three areas; Knowledge, Attitudes and Skills. Four different sets of age specific modules are developed for target trainee groups, younger adolescent girls (11 to 13 years) and older adolescent girls (14 to 17 years). The modules are:

Module & Session details for Older Girls

Self

- Self-Identity & Awareness
- Self Esteem Building
- Social Constructs of Gender & How Gender affects
- What is Power, Power & Patriarchy
- Bodily Integrity
- Puberty (What, How & When)
- Menstruation & Bodily Changes
- My Body, My Respect
- Emotions & Relationships

Self-Efficacy

- Effective Communication
- Verbal & Non-verbal communication
- Gender & Communication
- Healthy Relationships
- What is violence
- Different forms of violence
- The change we want to see

Resourcefulness

- Gender & Aspirations
- How work is gendered
- Women & Work
- What is Aspiration
- Aspiration Mapping & Goal Setting
- Time Management
- Stress Management
- Leadership skills

Employability

- Preparing for Work
- Resume Building
- Preparation to face job interviews
- Work Management
- Conduct & Attitude at work
- Money Management
- Prioritizing, Budgeting & savings

Module & Session details for Younger Girls

Me & My Environment

- Self Identity & Awareness
- Social Constructs of Gender & How Gender affects
- What is Power, Power & Patriarchy
- Gender & Communication
- Ways of Verbal & Non Verbal Communication
- How to make communication effective

Me & My Body

- Anatomy, Puberty & Menstruation
- Verbal & Non verbal communication
- Gender & Communication
- Healthy Relationships
- What is violence
- Different forms of violence
- The change we want to see

My Emotions & Relationships

- Gender & Aspirations
- How work is gendered
- Women & Work
- What is Aspiration
- Aspiration Mapping & Goal Setting
- Time Management
- Stress Management
- Leadership skills

Me & My Aspirations

- Preparing for Work
- Resume Building
- Preparation to face job interviews
- Work Management
- Conduct & Attitude at work
- Money Management
- Prioritizing, Budgeting & savings

P.A.C.E ADOLESCENT GIRLS LIFE SKILLS TRAINING PROJECT

The project 'Empowering Adolescent Girls with Transformation Certified Life Skills' implemented in three blocks of East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya with an objective to provide a safe and fun learning experience where adolescent girls from marginalized communities can be equipped with life skills and knowledge to help maintain a happy and healthy life, stay in or return to school and feel empowered to protect themselves from insults and abuse and to pursue their dreams.

OBJECTIVES

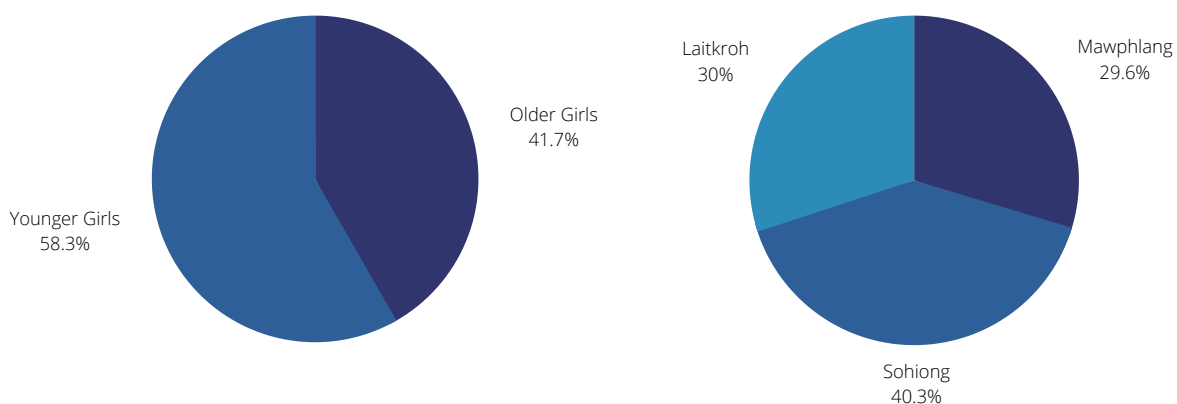
The program was implemented with following objectives

- 1.To develop understanding of adolescent girls from rural communities of Meghalaya about gender, power, and patriarchy, and how these constructs influence and impact their identity
- 2.To enhance specific skills (communication, problem solving, goal setting, etc.) that can enhance girls' agency and negotiation ability to assert themselves and exercise their rights & choices
- 3.To build aspiration and knowledge about different career opportunities and understandings to address challenges generated by gendered societal expectations
- 4.To develop leadership skills to be able to prevent or protect oneself from early marriage, trafficking, sexual abuse and other kinds of Gender based violence at individual and community level
- 5.To equip girls with accurate information which will make them feel comfortable with their own bodies and sexuality and take informed decision for improved health and wellbeing

PROJECT REACH

The project 'Empowering Adolescent Girls with Transformation Certified Life Skills' was implemented in Mawphlang block, Sohiong block & Laitkroh block of East Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya in communities and educational institutes.

Adolescent girls of 11 to 13 and 14 to 17 years were identified from the schools and communities of these three blocks. 506 girls were identified from different social backgrounds and been included in the life skill training process. (The village wise adolescent girls reach is attached as Annexure).



DETAILS OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

TRAINING OF TRAINERS

Training of Trainers:

A 6 day trainers' training workshop was organised for the project team members from MIG. The purpose of this trainers' training workshop was to train facilitators who could carry out life skills education trainings for adolescent girls in the schools. The specific objectives of the workshop were

- To help facilitators understand the adolescents' issues and give them in-depth understanding of the lessons of the 8 scientifically developed modules
- To introduce participatory training methods and different tools to be used to train the girls
- To introduce the sample monitoring and knowledge assessment process to be adopted to capture the change among the girls after the training

Nine trainers of MIG were trained by HBT's master trainers in the ToT process.

TRAINING CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Post ToT, the 9 trained trainers took the certification test which included synopsis writing and teach back method. They were further certified by the master trainers.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Engaging with stakeholders is crucial to the success of any program intervention. With this objective, the MIG team conducted stakeholder's meeting with the parents of young girls, the concerned village headmans, school principals and school management committee members and discussed with them about the program objectives and also got understanding about the location specific issues and challenges.

BASELINE SURVEY

A baseline survey was conducted among the adolescent girls with a sample size of 13 percent of total trainees. A structured questionnaire was used for the baseline survey (The baseline questionnaire is attached as annexure). Baseline survey was conducted among 66 girls across training location. The specific objectives of the survey were to assess

1. Whether adolescent girls possess the skills to achieve their goals and to make informed decisions/ choices for improved health, wellbeing and life opportunities
2. Whether adolescent girls can communicate well, have mature relationships and have a greater sense of self
3. Whether adolescent girls possess the skills to be able to prevent or protect themselves from sexual abuse or other kinds of gender based violence
4. To assess the level of work preparedness of adolescent girls

Data was collected before and after training to understand pre-existing knowledge and attitudes regarding the following constructs: identity and awareness, power and patriarchy, bodily integrity, emotions and relationships, self-efficacy, understanding violence, resourcefulness and employability.

The highlights of the findings are:

- While most of the girls have high aspirations about their future, many of them lack the knowledge about the right resources to get information about higher education and employment opportunities. 45% of the girls said that they do not know what are the sources from where they can get information about higher education and employment opportunities.
- The idea of skill training was new to many of the girls, with 36% girls saying they had never heard of skill training before. However, most of the girls showed an interest in taking skill training.

- Even though the Khasi tribe practices matrilineal system, 48% of the girls said that their father or grandfather take the decisions in their family.
- The girls believed that violence disproportionately harms women and that they are more prone to violence by virtue of their gender. The survey also brought to light the fact that most of the girls thought that there is a low to medium degree of violence in their area. 50% of the girls stated that girls are at the receiving end of gender-based violence.
- Because of the taboo attached to menstruation, 35% of the girls were not aware of the cause of menstruation. While 15% of the girls said they did not know why menstruation happens, 20% of the girls said that menstruation is either a curse of god or a process to remove dirty blood from the body.
- Many girls related the idea of a perfect body with their looks and physicality. Gendered nature of beauty led to many girls believing that having no disability, being fair and beautiful and having a “perfect figure” is synonymous with having a perfect body.
- For many of the young girls covered by the surveys, there was a lack of skills and ability to communicate. 56% of the girls stated that they have been taught by their parents to speak in low voice and politely since they are girls.
- The girls face difficulty in managing their emotions, especially sadness.
- The same questionnaire was used with same sample girls to understand the program impact. The endline survey result is mentioned in the outcome part of the report.





IMPARTING P.A.C.E. TRAINING

The training process involved the activities such as, mobilization of adolescent girls, village wise batch formation, life skill training, and pre-post knowledge assessment which was undertaken by MIG team.

TRAINING DURATION

The Gap Inc.'s 'Personal Advancement & Career Enhancement' (P.A.C.E.) training for community set up is of 27 hours training for older girls and 42 hours 15 minutes for younger girls. The training constitutes four modules for older girls; Self, Self-Efficacy, Resourcefulness and Employability. For younger girls, the four modules are: Me and my Environment, Me and my Body, Me and my Emotions and Relationships, and Me and my Aspirations. The module wise, session plan and time allocation for training is as follows.

Girls participated in two hours of training per day. On holidays and festivals (which are times of high absenteeism and school holidays), the practice sessions were conducted somewhat more flexibly with respect to timing. Catch-up sessions were conducted for trainees who were unable to attend a session. This flexibility is reflected in average attendance which was very high, ranging between 94 and 100 percent. With these adjustments, overall program implementation took 21 training days for younger girls and 14 days for older girls.

TRAINING APPROACH

The training used participatory teaching methods, such as group discussion, brainstorming, role-play, small group work, educational games, and storytelling. The group activities for different sessions were conducted following the module. In few schools girls were found hesitant to some of the games and activities, initially seeing them as childish and preferred lecture method, but later they started taking interest in the group activity and wanted to perform better.



The games and activities provided participants with opportunities to interact freely, and often generated discussion that couldn't have yielded by other methods. The intention of the training was to provide a fun and relaxed environment, NOT one that resembles a classroom!

Training Principle followed



FELICITATION EVENT

On 21 December 2021 a felicitation event was organized to reward the adolescent girls who had undergone the “Empowering Adolescent Girls with Transformational Certified Life Skills Training Programme”. The event was organized at MAMETI Hall in Upper Shillong in the presence of adolescent girls trainees of three intervened blocks. The stakeholders such as the Principal and teachers of Ram Krishna Mission Secondary School, Mawrah, Presbyterian Secondary School, Mawbeh, Tlongumiam Secondary School, St. Joseph’s LP School, SSA LP School, Pyndenglitha Secondary School and Rev Thomas Jones Secondary School along with the ASHA and Anganwadi workers of the respective blocks were present during the event.

The district level felicitation event was graced by Meghalaya Chief Secretary Smt. RV Suchiang and Deputy Commissioner East Khasi Hills, Smt. Isawanda Laloo. HBT’s founder chairperson Dharitri Patnaik and Executive Director Arpita Pattnaik were also present.

In her address, the chief guest of the occasion Smt. RV Suchiang appreciated the efforts of the MIG and HBT for disseminating the knowledge and training to the adolescent girls to prepare themselves for the challenging world ahead. She also motivated the trainees to share and spread the knowledge gained from the training and be an inspiration to their family and friends.

Ms Isawanda Laloo spoke on the need to extend this program to other areas of the state where in spite of being a matrilineal system, yet atrocities against girls are still prevalent in many forms. So, sending a girl for education is like educating the whole family.

Recommendations

Conducting life skills training for boys: The Chief Secretary, Community members and school stakeholders stated that there must also be similar training for the boys in the villages under SVM.

Conducting a longer programme and reaching out to more adolescents: The Deputy Commissioner and Chief Secretary recommended that more such programme should be conducted for a longer duration and reaching out to more number of adolescents in the state helping them in having smooth transition from childhood to adolescence.



PROJECT OUTCOME

The training program was organized with an intent to empower the adolescent girls to build their lives and their dreams. The training was able to improve skills of girls to achieve their career goals and to address harmful social practices like child marriage, gender inequality, and dowry through well informed and skilled adolescents. The learning outcomes of the training sessions as captured are mentioned below.

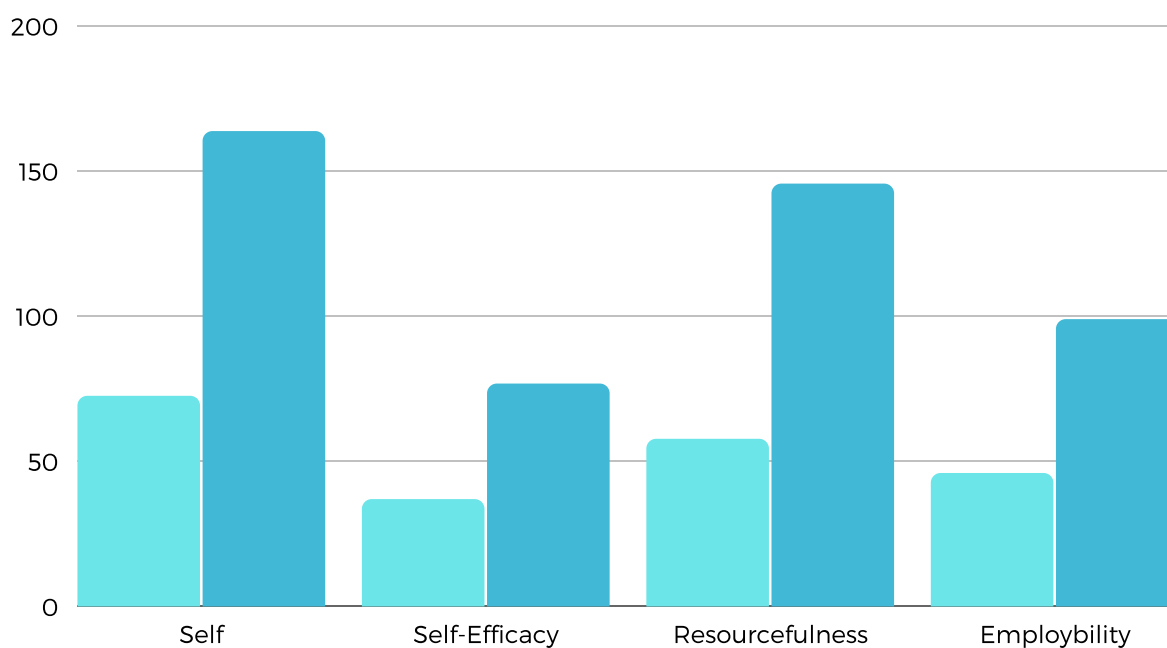
KNOWLEDGE BEFORE AND AFTER THE P.A.C.E. TRAINING

The knowledge assessment was done through structured digital set of questionnaire with each batch.

OLDER GIRLS

The knowledge of Self, Self-efficacy, Resourcefulness and Employability prior to the training and post training was assessed and scored. The module wise average scoring of 211 older adolescent girls is mentioned in the below table.

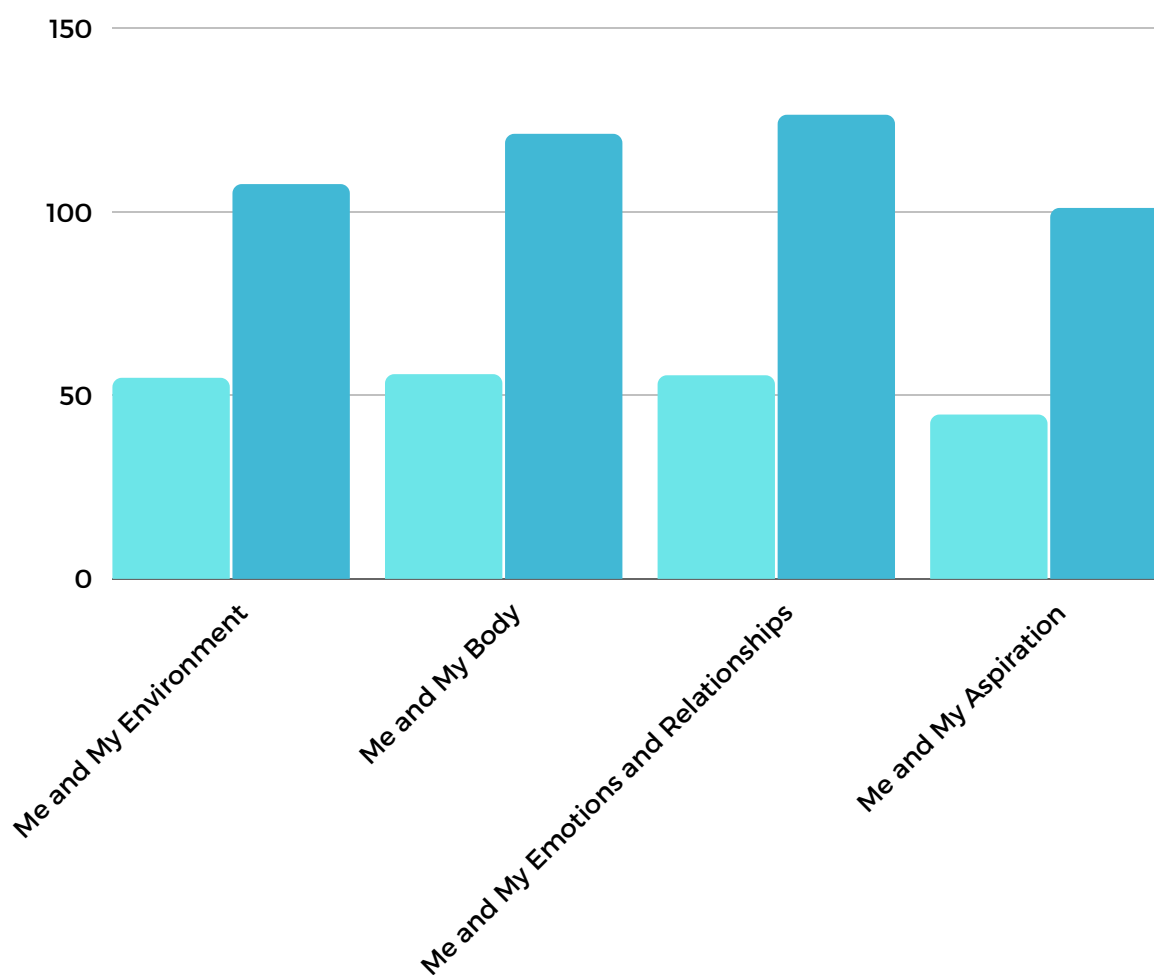
TRAINING MODULE	AVERAGE SCORE (BEFORE TRAINING)	AVERAGE SCORE (AFTER TRAINING)
SELF	72.5	163.6
SELF-EFFICACY	36.9	76.6
RESOURCEFULNESS	57.7	145.5
EMPLOYABILITY	45.9	98.8



YOUNGER GIRLS

The knowledge of Me and my Environment, Me and my Body, Me and My Emotions and Relationships and Me and My Aspirations prior to the training and post training was assessed and scored. The module wise average scoring of 295 younger adolescent girls is mentioned in the below table.

TRAINING MODULE	AVERAGE SCORE (BEFORE TRAINING)	AVERAGE SCORE (AFTER TRAINING)
ME AND MY ENVIRONMENT	54.7	107.4
ME AND MY BODY	55.7	121.1
ME AND MY EMOTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS	55.4	126.3
ME AND MY ASPIRATIONS	44.7	100.9





MODULE WISE TRAINING OUTCOME

YOUNGER GIRLS

Me and my Environment

Training participants were asked to describe their experiences of utilizing the Me and My Environment learning in the personal, educational and societal aspects of their lives. The training enabled the girls to understand the below

- Identify and articulate statements descriptive of self and identity
- Identify influences that shape self and identity.
- Gender as a social construct and to identify the role of patriarchy in daily life
- Increase the comfort level and capacity of participants for communicating with adults
- Develop effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills

About applying the learning in day to life, the girls stated they are able to communicate confidently and express themselves effectively. They developed a critical understanding of gender concerns and are able to explore scopes of negotiation to break gender norms.

Bakmenlang takes the path towards confidence

Bakmenlang Myrthong is a 12 year old girl from Mawkdok village studying in sixth standard at Peniel English School, Laitkroh.

Bakmenlang Myrthong being at that phase of adolescent stage is going through confusions and curiosity that life has to offer. Before attending the training programme she was an introvert by nature, shy and quiet. Initially at the beginning of the training Bakmenlang would try to avoid participating in activities but gradually she felt comfortable and started to be an active participant during the training.

When asked from the teachers about her performance in the school, they said that at first she lacked confidence in the classroom and did not ask questions about the topic taught



in the class, but now after attending the training she actively participates in classroom interaction. But what grasp the attention of everyone was that, when she got her periods for the first time she did not panic nor did she seek help from the teachers or her mother, she cleverly managed to handle the situation on her own. When asked as to how she managed to do things on her own, she simply said the life skill training programme has been of great assistance to her as during the sessions she was taught about puberty and menstruation. She also shared the knowledge imparted to her friends for their awareness.

Badashisha Myrthong, the elder sister of Bakmenlang expresses her thankfulness to MIG and HBT for organising and conducting such life skills training programmes for the adolescent girls as this has been an encouragement, an inspiration not just to the girls but to the whole community as well.

Me & My Body

The module 'Me & My Body' for adolescent girls helped them feel comfortable with their bodies, and made them better informed about sexuality, reproduction and prevention strategy so that they can

make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive lives. The module focuses on bodily changes during adolescence and the impact of these. Sessions within the module also deal with issues of safety and of consent.

Trainees shared that the training was able to:

- Equip participants with accurate information about anatomy, puberty, and the human reproductive system
- Provide basic information on sex and sexuality
- Present menstruation as a biological process and debunk some of the myths associated with menstruation.
- Explain concepts of safety, consent, and rights

Educate a girl, educate a family

Ibashisha Kurbah, a 13 year old girl of Mawpunrum village, East Khasi Hills district, Meghalaya is one of the trainees of the P.A.C.E training programme. She is studying in class VII in St. Joseph School, Mawpunrum. The eldest daughter among the five children of her family, she has to look after her little brothers and sisters while her parents are off to work in their field.

During the training session she was found to be a very active participant and later after asking her about the training she received few months back, she said that the training has made her become more confident and be more presentable and respect the elders more. She also learnt about money and time management.



Ibashisha said the one session that helped her is 'Me and My body'. As an adolescent who has reached puberty this activity made her more aware of menstrual health and hygiene. She understands and has a clearer picture about the growth and development of her body that she is experiencing.

Ibashisha mother's expressed her gratitude to the P.A.C.E training program as this training help her daughter and brought about changes in her attitude. She is more responsible now and often tries to teach her siblings and also help in household chores. Whenever she gets any pocket money from them, the mother realised that she now tries to save in a piggy bag. Mrs Kurbah stressed that this training is needed especially in the villages as most of the adolescent girls get very less opportunity and do not have much curricular activities in schools therefore such training will be beneficial and learned more about the important lessons in lives.

Me & My Emotions and Relationships

The module "Me and My Emotions and Relationships" enabled the girls to have an understanding of their changing emotions. This module has equipped the participants to think for themselves and assess new situations with new people so that the excitement of growing up is guided by an increasing capacity to identify and negotiate one's own desires, choices, and decisions. The module has helped the girls:

- To understand one's own emotions and how they impact our choices and decisions.
- To understand what it means to feel attracted to people around them and understand the importance of forming friendships and peer networks that will support them.
- To think through emotions and relationships with evolving maturity
- To learn about violence and healthy and unhealthy relationships

Ibandashisha's inspiring story of supporting her family

Ibandashisha Mawlong is a 13 year old girl studying in class Six at Mawbeh Presbyterian Secondary School. She comes from a poor family background where her mother is the only breadwinner of the family.

The life skill training programme conducted at her school has brought some changes in her day to day life. At the beginning of the training Ibandashisha was a shy and timid girl who was always hesitant to answer any questions as she lacked self-confidence. But during the training she slowly but gradually picked up pace and showed a lot of improvement in ways of conducting herself. She became more confident in expressing herself to the trainers as well as to the other girls.



On speaking with her mother the trainers were informed that Ibandashisha's mother can no longer support her daughter's education financially and that she would have to stop going to school from next year. After hearing about this, the trainers suggested and informed her mother about the various scholarships that could be availed from the State and Central Government and they also informed that the JNV Schools also do provide free education. Her mother has agreed to look into this matter.

In the process of the training, the one topic that really caught her interest was 'money management'. This particular activity has had a great impact on her because she was really keen to help herself, to be independent so that she can lend a helping hand to her mother. Since she comes from a poor family background it is difficult for her mother to financially support her in her studies. After attending the training programme Ibandashisha at a very young age took the responsibility to financially support oneself by putting up a small fast food stall to earn enough to at least pay her own tuition fees.

Mrs Rose Mary Mawlong, Ibandashisha's mother expressed her gratitude to MIG and HBT for conducting such a program as this has really encouraged her daughter to be independent and focus in her goal settings. This training has brought a vast transformation in her life as she is now more aware of her environment and she also understands the importance of expressing her emotions.

Me & My Aspirations

Through this module, the girls were able to build awareness and understanding of what it means to aspire and to achieve. The module also enabled participants to identify their own interests and aspirations. The girls also learnt some essential skills such as time and money management, priority setting, decision-making, problem solving, and leadership, which helped them achieve some of their aspirations. Through the training, the girl were able to



- Think about and identify their interests and aspirations.
- Understand how to work on achieving their aspirations.
- Build an understanding of concrete ways of planning for the achievement of their aspirations.
- Get insight into human rights and the significance of these rights in their own real lives and contexts

Aibahun's journey towards happiness

"WHEN YOU KNOW BETTER YOU CAN DO BETTER", Aibahun Kharmyndai a 12 year old girl, the sixth among the eight siblings of her parents from a Khasi Community in Meghalaya was left an orphan at the age of six when her mother passed away and her father left. They were left on their own and had to be responsible for themselves. The eldest brother has to work hard to provide for the necessity of the family. Life has never been easy ever since, Aibahun sometimes feel that there is no hope for her Higher Education as financially they are not stable. Before attending the HBT Training she did not know the ways and path to choose a better career so that she can be independent. She has the desire, the dream to stand on her own two feet to be responsible for her family but she lacked the knowledge on how to reach her goals.



The life skill training programme conducted for the adolescent girls at Pyndenglitha Mawphlang Block opened doors for Aibahun to fulfil her dreams. During the training session on 'Me and My Aspiration' she understood how to differentiate between her 'Wants' and her 'Needs', she also learned that even the smallest thing she does like saving money, can help her in achieving her goals. She now has understood the importance of having a bank account. She also got guidance and advice on how to apply for government scholarships and schemes for students who are not financially stable. This training has brought a ray of hope for her to further continue her studies. Mr Debutstar Kharmyndai the maternal uncle of Aibahun has expressed his gratefulness to MIG and HBT who, through the trainers have given his niece the guidance that she needed as she is in the process of growing up, because he has noticed and observed few changes in her ways of living. She has now become more aware of her environment, she has become more outspoken when it comes to expressing her feelings and emotions.

Saralin's story of overcoming her fears

Saralin Kurbah of St. Joseph School Mawpunrum, studying in the sixth standard is one of the trainees of the P.A.C.E training programme that was held at Sohiong Block. She is the youngest daughter of Mrs Primitiba Kurbah who comes from a very poor family background. Her mother is the sole bread earner of the family as her husband had passed away; she earns her living only through farming which makes it difficult for the family to meet their ends.

During the training session she was found to be a very active participant however, when inquired from her mother about her behaviour in and around, she said that although Saralin is active both at home and in school, there was something that always seemed to bother her, especially when

asked to go out to the shop or somewhere on her own. Later it was found that she was afraid to go alone as she was not sure of the environment around. She was insecure and did not know whom to trust. But after the session and activities on 'Safe and unsafe spaces', she became more clear about the places that was safe for her, it inspired her to learn self-defence for her safety.

The training has not only taught her about the importance of self-defence but it has also given her knowledge on how to manage money and time as they play a vital role in moulding her future. She has now learnt to use money in a more productive way, not to spend much on unnecessary things. She keeps track of her chores in a diary to manage her time, these are the small little things that Saralin has learned the training and has started to practice in her day to day life.

Saralin's mother said that the P.A.C.E life skill training program of adolescent girls has made a good impact in her daughter's life which has brought about changes in her ways of conducting herself with her family, friends and the others. She has now become more thoughtful when it comes to expressing herself to others.



OLDER GIRLS

Self

The module enabled the girls to learn about their own identity within the larger framework of the concepts of gender, power and patriarchy. Through the module the girls learnt how gender norms and expectations often dictate their sense of self and how concepts of power and patriarchy can impact how they interact with the world. Through the various sessions under this module, the girls were able to develop greater confidence in themselves and their body image, while also learning to deal with their emotions effectively.

Some of the major takeaways from the modules are:

- Understanding of how their identity and sexuality as a girl is constructed by their community.
- Ability to understand, deconstruct, and create their identities on their own terms.
- Greater self-confidence.
- Stronger self-awareness.
- Awareness about the bodily and emotional changes during adolescence
- Knowledge about myths and stereotypes associated with menstruation and bodily changes.
- Understanding of the different kinds of relationships in their life and developing the ability to navigate these relationships

Self Efficacy

The Self Efficacy module aimed at helping the girls learn about the gendered nature of communication and how they can develop effective and stronger communication skills. Through the various sessions, the girls were able to comprehend the interplay of power in their daily lives. The girls were able to recognise violence and its causes, making them more self-assured and prepared to deal with it.

- Communicate aspirations effectively.
- Assert themselves and exercise their agency and choices.
- Understand the impact of power in their relationships.
- Understand what constitutes a healthy relationship.
- Learn about and be able to identify different forms of violence

Resourcefulness

Through the previous two modules, the girls were able to gain awareness and exposure which helped them gain a stronger sense of self. The resourcefulness module enabled the girls to start thinking and working towards their career pathways.

The modules helped the girls:

- To have a clear vision of their goals and are able to concretely develop a plan for further education or employment.
- To be able to identify the information needed to access their goals and where to access it.
- To have an understanding of basic finances including banking, saving, and spending money.
- To understand which skill sets are needed for the careers they choose.
- To be able to identify community role models that can provide them guidance for their future.
- To be aware of appropriate, safe, fair, and ethical work practices.

A dreamer, that's what Haphibasuk is

"A dreamer, that's what she was". To dream and to make it a reality is something that we all aspire to do. To be strong willed to be determined to reach our goals is what we should be inspired to do. The story of Haphibasuk Lyngdoh a young aspirant studying in 10th standard at Village Durbar Secondary School, Swer will inspire the young generations to work towards achieving their goals.

Haphibasuk Lyngdoh is the eldest daughter of Mrs Pyntiplang Lyngdoh from Mawkdok village, Meghalaya. Coming from a small village this girl has big dreams to fulfil and her never quitting attitude is an example to be set to the younger generation. At first, before attending the training programme Haphibasuk did not have a clear idea of how to go about in



fulfilling her dreams. She aspires to be an airhostess and to work as a cabin crew. Just like the birds she too wants to spread her wings and fly.

During the training she shared her aspirations with the trainers and seeks their help to get further information on this course. The trainers without any hesitation offered to render their help to her, they gave her the necessary information that she required to achieve her goals. The trainers tried to the best of their ability to convince her mother to let her take up this profession and after much information that was shared with them, Haphibasuk's mother agree to let her daughter to make her choice of profession.

The life skill training programme has inspired and given hopes to young adults in pursuing their dreams.



Employability

The module enabled participants to learn specific skills that help them move towards preparing for their future career paths. They also learnt how to create a resume, how to prepare for an interview, how to conduct themselves at work, and how to manage their finances. The girls also shared that they gained knowledge about enterprise and entrepreneurship and how to start their own business and plan for it.

The girls shared that due to the training they were able to:

- Identify the type of jobs they want to apply for.
- Feel prepared with a C.V. and interview tips for applying for a job of their choice.
- Gain knowledge about conducting themselves in a workplace environment.
- Gain knowledge about financial management and the ability to make their own budgets and practice saving for their futures.

Maureena's story of moving towards a bright future

Maureena Dapynsuk Syiemlieh is a 16 year old girl studying in 10th standard at Pyndenglitha Secondary School, the fourth child amongst the six siblings of her parents from Pyndenglitha Khasi community Meghalaya. Her father is a business man and her mother is a school teacher.

Maureena Dapynsuk Syiemlieh a trainee of P.A.C.E Adolescent Girls training at Pyndenglitha village Mawphlang Block. At the beginning Maureena being a teenager was not so serious in her studies; she made very little effort from her end to do well in school. While speaking to her mother, she said that Maureena was not as responsible as she should have been; she did not value time and waking her up in the early morning hours was a tough job to do. Time management was



a difficult task for her, as she did not have a proper schedule to divide her chores.

During the aspiration building session when she was asked to do 'Goal mapping', she was hesitant and confused because her aspirations were not clear to her as she did not know which path to take on. But after the training she realized and understood how to prioritise the important things in her life. She has now kept a dairy routine to keep track of her time schedule especially for her studies to prepare for the Board Exam. When asked about her aim in life she said she aspires to be in the Police Force. Through this training she has learned that it is only sheer hard work that can bring her success.

Her mother Mrs Rolina Syiemlieh is obliged to MIG and HBT for bringing a transformation in her daughter's way of prioritising things in her life. Mrs Rolina has stated that before attending this life skill training programme Maureena had little to very less knowledge on how to conduct herself, as every teenager feels very confused at this stage of life, being a parent she has tried her best to imbibe the best of knowledge about adolescent life but after attending the training these knowledge were made more clear to her as she now knows about the different kinds of emotions and how to tackle them. She understands the significance of personal hygiene and has been more careful and attentive towards herself.

ENDLINE SURVEY

An endline survey was conducted among the adolescent girls with a sample size of 13 percent of total trainees. A structured questionnaire was used for the survey (The questionnaire is attached as annexure) which was conducted among 66 girls across training location. The findings of the survey are as follows:

- Both younger and older adolescents expressed an enhanced sense of self worth after training. They were able to confidently present themselves and articulated a far greater aspiration for the future. 94% of girls had a higher confidence and awareness about higher education and employment opportunities.
- Girls had an improved understanding of gender and patriarchy. While before the training 48% of girls believed that father or grandfather must be the decision maker in their family, after the training 56% of girls stated that all the members of the family must be part of decision making.
- Both younger and older adolescents were able to identify different acts of violence in their surroundings and daily lives. However, unlike the baseline survey where 50% girls said women face gender-based violence because of power imbalance, 52% of girls in the endline survey said that it's because girls are physically weak.
- There was an increased understanding of puberty, the onset of menstruation and bodily changes as well as changes in emotions that occur during adolescence.
- The girls had a more positive body image, increased self-esteem and confidence about their physical appearance. Prior to training, this knowledge was far less- Instead of relating a perfect body to physical appearance, 67% of girls stated that a perfect body relates to being healthy.
- The girls had a better understanding of dealing with their emotions, especially sadness. 56% girls stated that they now talk to their family and friends and seek advice when they are going through a tough time.



Pillars of success: Voices of stakeholders



Speaking with sir Lamphrang Rani the principal of Pyndenglitha Secondary School at Mawphlang Block East Khasi Hills Meghalaya has said that the P.A.C.E Adolescent Girls Life Skills Training Programme held at his school, has brought a positive influence on his students. The girls are more confident with their response in the class; they have become more dedicated towards their studies as they understand the importance of goal setting in life. Sir Philarius Mawlein an assistant teacher at the school has also observed similar changes in the behaviour of the girls. He said that in comparison to before attending the training the girls did lack a sense of responsibility towards themselves as well as their studies, but after attending the training they are disciplined they are now clearer with what they want and what they need. They are freer to express their feelings and emotions. This training has made them aware about the different kinds of violence in the society and how to handle such situation.

Sir Rani and Sir Philarius has said that such training should be continued to other schools because this training gives an insight about the responsibilities, the knowledge and skills, to prioritize the important things in their life. It enhances the confidence which improve the overall performance. They also said that this training should be given not only to the girls but to the boys as well.

WAY FORWARD

The project “Empowering adolescent girls with transformational certified life skills” was able to address the needs of adolescent girls of East Khasi Hills studying in schools and in communities to an extent. Implementing the project in more communities can offer important skill sets to more girls to get a better understanding of their self, gender, patriarchy, their bodily changes, and their emotions and relationships in the changing phase. It will also enable them to build aspirations and resourcefulness and work preparedness towards their future. More focus can be given on building aspirations for older girls, and towards better sexual and reproductive health and menstrual health of younger girls.

The program has been acknowledged by stakeholders at different level and there is a scope to scale up the program in all villages of the three blocks in phase wise manner. The impact of this programme on adolescent girls and communities will lead to improved social status of Khasi communities as a whole contributing to the objective of Smart Village Movement. stakeholders like

state government officials, community members, parents and school stakeholders have raised a demand for conducting similar programmes for boys in the state. HBT is GAP Inc.'s P.A.C.E. license holder, which also has a curriculum for life skills training of boys called GEMS. The same can be imparted to boys in the state.

Additionally, keeping in mind the idea of smart villages, a standalone program to empower the girls will have limited impact. A comprehensive program having focus on adolescents including boys and girls to enhance their access to resources, tools, information, and knowledge should be implemented in all the other proposed smart villages, eventually reaching and empowering every adolescent in the state.



ANNEXURE

BLOCK	VILLAGE/SCHOOL NAME	BATCH SIZE (OLDER GIRLS)	BATCH SIZE (YOUNGER GIRLS)
Mawphlang C&RD	Nongrum Mawphlang/Mawkohmon/Mission Mawphlang		24
	Nongrum Mawphlang/Mawkohmon/Mission Mawphlang		16
	Pyndenglitha		31
	Pyndenglitha		31
	Nongrum Mawphlang/Mawkohmon/Mission Mawphlang	24	
	Pyndenglitha	24	
Laitkroh	Mawjriong/Mawkdok		32
	Mawbeh/Mawstep		21
	Mawrah/Rangtmah		34
	Mawrah/Rangtmah	24	
	Mawbeh/Mawstep	21	
	Mawjriong/Mawkdok	20	
Sohiong	Mawpunrum/Mawpunneng/Mawpunneng A		20
	Weilyngkut/Nongur		43
	Weilyngkut/Nongur		43
	Weilyngkut/Nongur	32	
	Weilyngkut/Nongur	32	
	Weilyngkut/Nongur	34	

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Interviewer Information

Name of Interviewer

Date

1. General Information

- Girl's Name:
- Age (in year):
- School/Community Name:
- Number of family members:

2. Education Status

- Are you continuing your education: (Y/N)
 - Name of your school/collage:
 - Which class/Year you are studying in:
 - If No: when did you leave your study:
 - ❖ Up to Primary (Class V)
 - ❖ Up to Upper Primary (Class VII)
 - ❖ Up to Secondary (Class X)
 - ❖ Up to Higher Secondary (Class XII)
 - ❖ Never been to school Reason for leaving education (Drop out):
 - ❖ Poor family Background
 - ❖ No family/Parent's Support
 - ❖ No interest in education
 - ❖ No future aspiration for becoming employed
 - ❖ Burden of household chores/taking care of siblings
 - ❖ Health issues/illness
 - ❖ School/Collage in long distance
 - ❖ Safety issues
 - ❖ Early Marriage
 - ❖ After menstruation started
 - ❖ Any other, please specify -----
 - Do you regularly attend school/collage? Y/N
 - If No, Reason for not attending school/college regularly?
 - ❖ No family/Parent's Support
 - ❖ Classes are not interesting
 - ❖ No future aspiration for becoming employed
 - ❖ Burden of household chores/taking care of siblings
 - ❖ Health issues/illness
 - ❖ School/Collage in long distance
 - ❖ Safety issues
 - ❖ After menstruation started
 - ❖ School infrastructure/atmosphere is not conducive
 - ❖ Any other, please specify -----
- ### 3. Career & Employability
- What you want to be in future? -----
 - Do you know what are the sources from where you can get information about higher education and employment opportunities? Y/N

- Have you heard of Skill training? Y/N
- Do you want to take skill training? Y/N

4. About Power, Patriarchy & gender discrimination

- Do you believe you have been treated differently from your brother/s in your family Y/N?
- In what way you are treated differently?
- ❖ My brother is loved more
- ❖ Food get prepared in our house as per my brother's wish
- ❖ I hardly get any encouragement regarding my education/career
- ❖ I am not asked in any family level decision
- ❖ My mobility is restricted, but my brother is allowed to go where ever he wishes to What do you think, the reason might be
- ❖ Unawareness
- ❖ Societal customs & practices
- ❖ Boys stay with parents after marriage
- ❖ Boys do not face violence
- ❖ Boys can earn
- ❖ If others, please specify -----
 - According to you, who should take decision in your family?
- ❖ Father/Grandfather
- ❖ Mother/Grandmother
- ❖ Brother
- ❖ All of us together
- ❖ Don't know
 - If it is father or elder brother, why they should take the decision?
- ❖ Because they are earning
- ❖ They have better knowledge and experience
- ❖ Because they are adults
- ❖ Do not know

5. Incidence of gender based violence

- Do you think women and girls are prone to violence by virtue of their gender? Y/N
- From your idea about VAW, which of the following you may have experienced personally or may have seen some of your friends and relatives facing?
- ❖ Verbal outburst/shouting by husband or any other person
- ❖ Mobbing/Bullying
- ❖ Verbal conduct of sexual nature/Passing comment
- ❖ Request for sexual favour/jokes containing sexual nature
- ❖ Battering
- ❖ Touching
- ❖ Patting
- ❖ Pinching
- ❖ Beating/Kicking/hurting physically
- ❖ Aggressive body language indicating intimidation
- ❖ Any unsolicited physical contact including rape
- ❖ Others, please specify -----
 - What in your opinion is the degree of violence against women in your locality?
 - ❖ High

❖ Medium

❖ Low

❖ No violence

❖ Don't Know

- According to you why women & girls are facing gender based violence?

❖ Because they are physically weak

❖ Because women and girls are now days wearing short clothes, going out after evening etc.

❖ Because of unequal power distribution

❖ Do not know why

6. Menstrual Practice & related health issues

- Do you know about menstruation? Y/N
- Did you start menstruating? Y/N
- What do you think as the cause of menstruation?

❖ It is a physiological process

❖ It is caused by a sin/curse of God

❖ It is caused by a bodily disorder

❖ It is the process of removing dirty blood from body

❖ I don't know exactly What type of material do you use to manage menstruation (You can mark more than one option)

❖ Disposable sanitary pads

❖ Disposable Cloths

❖ Reusable cloths

❖ If others, please specify -----

- If you use usable sanitary cloths, how often do you wash the cloth?

❖ Once a day

❖ Every time I change the pad

❖ More than once a day Where do you put your cloths/underwear to dry?

❖ Open sunlight

❖ Under the dress

❖ Hidden dark place

❖ If others, please specify

- How often you wash your external genital during menstruation?
 - ❖ Once a day
 - ❖ Twice a day
 - ❖ More than twice a day
 - ❖ I don't wash daily

7. Perception about Perfect Body

- According to you what is a perfect body? (If it is a girl)

❖ If she is fair and beautiful

❖ If she is having perfect figure

❖ If she does not have any kind of disability

❖ If she is having no health issue

❖ Do not know

- What you think about yourself? Whether you have a perfect body or not? Y/N
- Do you think girls should be good looking and attractive? Y/N

8. Communication

- Are you able to communicate freely in the following places?
- ❖ In family (before father & elder brother etc)
- ❖ With friends & relatives
- ❖ In class before teachers o In your community/village
- ❖ In a gathering
- What are some ways that you should speak as taught by your parents?
- ❖ We should speak in low voice and politely as we are girls
- ❖ We should confidently speak
- ❖ We should not speak at all
- ❖ No, we are not taught any such thing

9. Emotion and Relationship

- Most of the time I feel
- ❖ Happy/Joyful
- ❖ Sad/Miserable
- ❖ Nervous/Afraid
- ❖ Surprised/Shocked
- ❖ Angry
- ❖ Love
- ❖ All the above
- When you feel happy, what you do
- ❖ I make lot of fun
- ❖ I share my happiness with my friends and family members
- ❖ I eat my favourite chocolates/go to restaurants
- ❖ Remain quiet and enjoy
- What you do when you feel sad
- ❖ I feel less energetic and restless
- ❖ I feel helpless & cry a lot
- ❖ I lose my appetite & skip food
- ❖ Sometimes I feel like committing suicide
- ❖ I share with my friends & family members and seek their advise
- ❖ I try to overcome by keeping myself engaged
- ❖ If others, please specify -----
- When you face some kind of problem, whom do you prefer to discuss with?
- ❖ My Mother/Sister/Grandmother
- ❖ My friends
- ❖ My teachers
- ❖ I have no one to discuss my issues
- ❖ If others, please specify -----



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