

# KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES (KAP) STUDY ON GENDER NORMS AND SOCIAL PRACTICES THAT RESTRICT YOUNG GIRLS' ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

-REPORT-

Prepared for:



**Save the Children®**

100 YEARS

**Prepared by:**

**Ipsos Research Private Limited**

301, 3rd Floor, Vipul Square, B-Block, Sushant Lok, Part-1, Sector-43,  
Gurugram-122003, India,

   [www.ipsos.com](http://www.ipsos.com)



Contacts:

**Parijat Chakraborty** [parijat.chakraborty@ipsos.com](mailto:parijat.chakraborty@ipsos.com)  
Ph: 9810496838

**Srikant Patel** [srikant.patel@ipsos.com](mailto:srikant.patel@ipsos.com)  
Ph: 9873911186

**Udita Ghosh Sarkar** [udita.sarkar@ipsos.com](mailto:udita.sarkar@ipsos.com)  
Ph: 9830235155

Ipsos Research Private Limited

301, 3rd Floor, Vipul Square, B-Block, Sushant Lok, Part-1 Sector-43, Gurugram-122003, India

Phone: +91-124-24692400

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## **List of Acronyms**

AIDS: Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome

AWC: Anganwadi Centre

AWW: Anganwadi Worker

BCC: Behaviour Change Communication

CAPI: Computer Assisted Personal Interviews

COVID: Corona Virus Disease

CSO: Civil Society Organisation

CWC: Child Welfare Committee

DCPU: District Child Protection Unit

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

FLWP: Female Work/Labour-force Participation

HH: Household

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ICDS: Integrated Child Development Services

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IDI: In-depth Interviews

ILO: International Labour Organization

KAP: Knowledge, Attitude and Practices

KII: Key Informant Interviews

LFP: Labour force participation

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NSSO: National Sample Survey Office

NULM: National Urban Livelihoods Mission

PHC: Primary Health Centre

PRA: Participatory Rural Appraisal

PRI: Panchayati Raj Institution

RTE: Right to Education

SRHR: Sexual and Reproductive **Health**

# Executive Summary

The state of West Bengal has a population of 9.03 crores of which 19.98 percent live below the poverty line.<sup>1</sup> Adolescents and youths (15-24 years) comprise approximately 20 percent of the total population in West Bengal<sup>2</sup> (48% Girls and 52% Boys of total population). This large cohort of young people represents a great demographic dividend with the potential to contribute to the state's overall economic growth and development. It has been shown that youths from the bottom 20 percent (poorest) of the households are disproportionately disadvantaged in terms of access to education, employment, and skilling opportunities as compared to youths belonging to upper income households.<sup>3</sup>

Poverty has come out to be one of the root causes behind the challenges faced by the youth in their transition from adolescence to adulthood. Poor financial conditions of household resulted in deprivation of education, health, proper nutrition, skilling, social protection and decent work opportunities. The situation becomes even worse when it gets coupled with age-old harmful social and gender-based norms forcing them to drop out of schools, get married and bear children at an early age. Consequently, the potential of youth group remains unexplored or underutilized.

Save the Children, along with partner organization Sabuj Sangha and supported by SC Italy, is implementing the project entitled 'New Horizons Plus, 2020-2023' in Kolkata and South 24 Parganas districts of West Bengal. It has embarked on scaling up its on-going New Horizons Programme in West Bengal through the "New Horizons Plus" program.

To understand the existing social and gender norms, barriers and challenges that inhibits adolescents' access to various facilities and alternatives in Education, Social Protection, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, Skill building or Livelihood, a qualitative study was conceptualized by Save the Children. Ipsos Research Private Limited conducted the research on "*Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) Study on Gender Norms and Social Practices that Restrict Young Girls' Economic Empowerment*" The objectives of conducting the KAP study were as follows:

1. To assess the knowledge level of adolescent, & youth (especially girls), parents, community members about skill building, SRHR and government social protection schemes
2. To gauge the underlying social and gender based perceptions among girls, boys, mother, father, caregivers, service providers and community members related to girls' middle, secondary and higher education, SRHR, skilling, employment and marriage
3. To comprehend the practice of girls, boys and their family members related to their education, skilling and employment and the social norms, social and cultural practices and behaviours that are considered to barriers in the path of girls and boys successful transition to adulthood.
4. Provide recommendations to formulate the strategies leading to improved KAP of the target group and design an integrated intervention for the target group

The study was conducted in urban areas of Kamarhati ULB and Metiabruz of KMC and rural area of Sumatinagar II Gram Panchayat in Sagar block of South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. Based on the study objectives, the research employed a participatory, action-oriented, gender focussed methodology adopting qualitative research design to cater multi-layered stakeholders. This approach was developed keeping in consideration a shift in paradigm from top-down to bottom-up approach. As part of the qualitative approach- Focus Group Discussions-FGD (with girls and boys separately), Key Informant Interview-KII(stakeholders), Intergenerational Trio (three generation males/females), In Depth Interviews-IDI(implementers) and Outlier Case Studies were conducted with the primary target respondents. The interviews were conducted in local and preferred languages. Transcriptions were done for all the interviews and content analysis was done based on the discussion guides and objectives of the assignment.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/west+bengal.html>

<sup>2</sup> Census 2011

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4628033/>

The findings of the study are being detailed out based on the broad heads of the present research. While talking about education, it has been observed that the desire to attain higher education is clearly evident across both adolescent and youth of both urban and rural areas. Although educational avenues are widespread especially in the urban areas, but monetary constraints plays an important role for youths and adolescents to pursue higher education. In rural areas, the lack of educational institutes coupled with monetary crunch forces the adolescent and youth of the area to drop out and seek employment.

There has not been much change in the employment opportunities available to the communities in both the urban and rural areas over the past 3 years as reported by the youth groups. Although seeking gainful employment is a priority, the lack of proper opportunities along with limited educational attainment severely hampers the ability of the youth attaining formal employment. It was found to be inhibited due to the lack of employment opportunities and societal pressure of early marriage or going outside for work limiting the females from seeking employment. Encouragingly, among the youth there is clear recognition that females should also take up employment as this contributes towards family income. However, the expectation is also that along with their job, females should take care of the household chores. In the villages as most boys drop out after middle school, they directly enter the agriculture sector working on farms, betel leaf gardens, plantations and crop cultivation with their families or neighbours. Scope of work outside farming, poultry or fishing is highly limited. However, with changing times the new generation is voicing a strong need for new employment avenues. Farming is easily damaged by natural calamities leading to long periods of lack of income which force many young boys to migrate for labour to other states. Both girls and boys are struggling to convert their education into lucrative employment. They need vocation specific skill training and assistance in accessing employment opportunities. The rural youth wish for aid in setting up small scale enterprises while urban youths get attracted to service sector. Entrepreneurial options are severely limited in both the urban and rural pockets. Limited education, lack of employment opportunities and skill sets severely hinder the youth of the area in entrepreneurship. Lack of financial capital limits their scope of starting their own ventures. Instead, most boys and girls want local alternatives like electric repair work, tailoring or beauty parlour work. In urban areas too this sentiment is echoed as boys and girls want to move out of family trades and engage in newer employment opportunities like digital technology, hospitality etc. The entrepreneurial options are also influenced by the lack of knowledge about new ventures that are coming up. Adolescents in the area have limited information avenues and they also do not have the necessary support system either from their families or the society which can direct them to varied entrepreneurial options with the skill sets that they possess. Enterprise opportunities also follow similar trends. Youth want to break from the enterprises of their parent's generation and start their own businesses. It is more common to see demand for local enterprise in rural areas as job opportunities are very few. However, a great degree of assistance is required for the youth to align with loans and entrepreneurship schemes offered by government and learn the basics of setting up new enterprises.

With respect to skill building, it was revealed that though skill building opportunities are available in the urban areas, but the target group (adolescent and youth) are not properly oriented about the same. Societal pressure of early marriage, burden of family also hinders the females to explore skill building initiatives and despite their interest they may not be able to enroll themselves in such programs. In the rural areas, there are not many options for skill building (training institutes are distantly placed) and more importantly some skill building initiatives under the government programs in the area have not been able to provide gainful employment to the targeted beneficiaries. The prevailing lack of skill building avenues coupled with the inability of the females to pursue their interest therefore creates a vicious cycle of poverty and lack of empowerment avenues.

While explored about the Sexual, Reproductive Health and Rights, it is evident that knowledge about physiological changes is limited and it is a challenge for the adolescent and youth of both urban and rural areas to gain some knowledge as no one is ready to discuss these issues openly. In urban and rural areas most girls had little knowledge of the menstruation cycle before onset of puberty. In urban areas while most use sanitary napkins, affordability concerns force many rural girls to resort to cloth usage. While girls got most of their information on SRHR topics from mothers, elder sisters and other female family members, boys depended on internet and friends/peers. There is a

complete lack of formal SRHR training in schools or through other government programs. Moreover, the route of message is also lacking. Clear dichotomy is also prevalent in terms of rights with the burden of family planning solely resting on the females.

Considering agency building prevailing in the society we can connect all other attitudes and practices into one interwoven dynamic and understand it through a gendered lens. Tackling gender-based differences could prove to be the source of greater educational, economic and social progress. Taking responsibility of the family in terms of providing financial support is perceived as the domain of men while women are supposed to take care of household chores. Females on the other hand are seen as lagging behind males on all these aspects and only taking the lead in 'household chores and responsibilities. However, some positive changes in gender roles are observed to be taking shape as rural girls now seem to have more options to study further compared to boys, due to the Kanyashree scheme. Girls in urban areas are more constrained due to safety and security reasons. Positive intergenerational changes are also taking shape as decision making has become more inclusive in present generations.

There is lack of full awareness about the different central government or state government run schemes and their target groups. One of the key gaps is the lack of proper communication amongst the communities about each scheme and its implementation at micro level. Schemes especially the ones targeted towards providing vocational training and entrepreneurial scope, lack the connect between training delivery and transitioning to an employment opportunity.

The study can be concluded with comprehensive recommendations to formulate the strategies leading to improved KAP of the target group and design an integrated intervention for the target group.

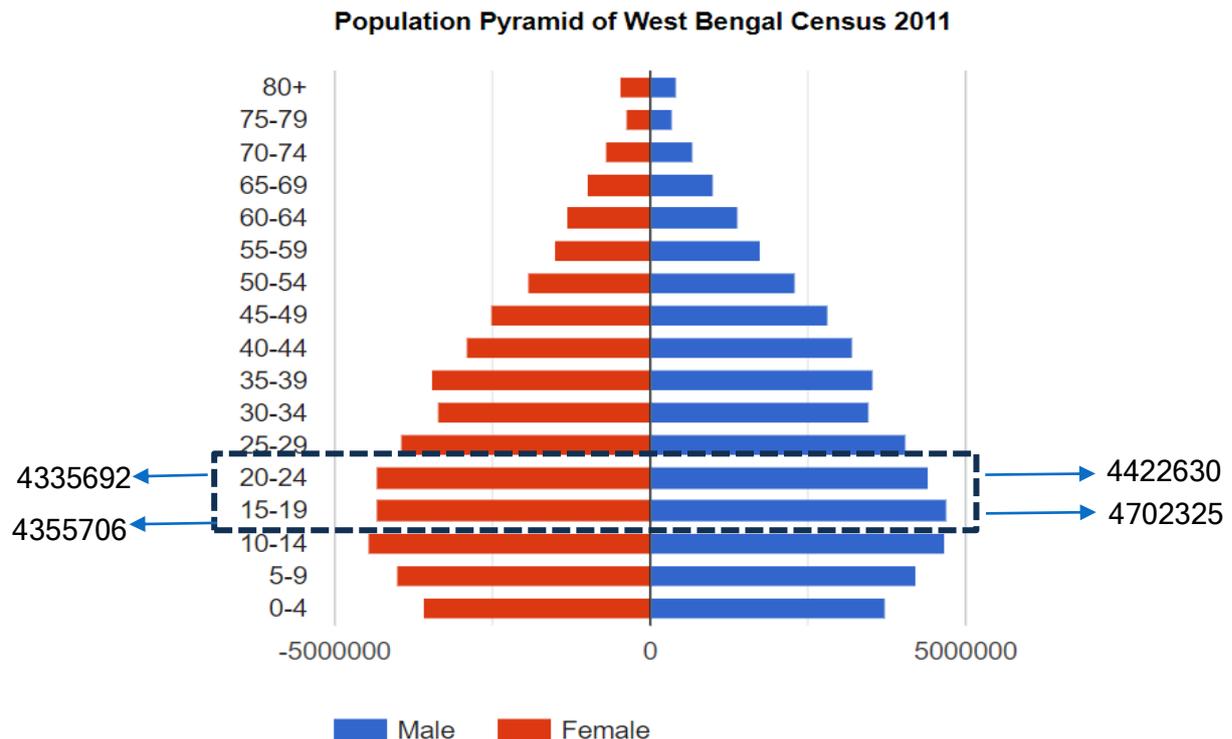
A few of the important suggested points are mentioned below:

- i. As part of community intervention program, it is recommended to sensitize both men and women on shared division of labour and changing gender roles in society
- ii. Counselling with family members specially the male members along with sensitization on child marriage, child labour, gender discrimination, law etc.
- iii. Handholding support to be provided to the trainees after attaining the training to become better entrepreneurs
- iv. To address some added methods of self-defense as part of life skill training so that the restrictions in movement for safety issues are diminished and gender-based violence are stopped
- v. SRHR module will not be limited to providing knowledge about sexual health, sexuality, contraception methods, menstrual health, STI, UTI, HIV/AIDS but also focus on the sexual orientation of adolescents and youth.

# Chapter 1: Overview of the study

## 1.1 Program Background and Rationale of the Study

The state of West Bengal has a total population of 9.13 crore of which 19.98 percent live below the poverty line.<sup>4</sup> West Bengal has 48.92 percent young people of which 72 percent of the young in the age group of 0-25 years stays in rural Bengal. Girls comprise a significant section of this age bracket, at 2.07 crore (46.65%) of the states' younger population.<sup>5</sup> Around 3.2 crore are in rural areas while only 1.25 crore reside in urban Bengal.



Source: <http://statisticstimes.com/demographics/india/west-bengal-population.php>

This large cohort of young people represents a great demographic dividend with the potential to contribute to the state's overall economic growth and development. The children are more than twice as likely as adults to be living in extreme poverty. There are an estimated 689 million children worldwide living in multidimensional poverty. They also are at greater risk of being out of school, being forced into harmful labor or child marriage, or giving birth while they are still children themselves. The poorest children are most likely to be left behind and deprived of their rights to survival, learning and protection from violence.

While on the positive side this reflects that the workforce in Bengal is young and can add value to growth, on the flipside a major concern is to provide this ever-increasing youth segment of the population with stable and decent job opportunities. Especially with rural population having a limited skill set, many move to other states for labour because of lack of educational and employment opportunities within their villages<sup>6</sup>.

Poverty has come out to be the root cause behind the challenges faced by the youth in their transition from adolescence to adulthood. Poor financial conditions of household resulted in deprivation of education, health, proper nutrition, skilling, social protection and decent work opportunities. The situation becomes even worse when it gets coupled with age-old harmful social and gender-based norms forcing them to drop out of schools, get married and bear children at an early age. Consequently, the potential of youth group remains unexplored or underutilized.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/west+bengal.html>

## 1.2 Study objectives and Scope of Work

Save the Children, along with partner organization Sabuj Sangha and supported by SC Italy, is implementing the project on Child Poverty entitled, ‘New Horizons Plus, 2020-2023’ in Kolkata and South 24 Parganas districts of West Bengal. Save the Children aimed to scale up its on-going New Horizons Programme in West Bengal. The goal of the project is to contribute towards the wellbeing of adolescents (15-17 years) and youth (18-24 years) by creating an enabling environment to support their socio-economic development in the state of West Bengal. While doing so, the project aims to contribute

- To improve the implementation and outreach of West Bengal Government’s ongoing social protection schemes, livelihood programmes and skill development initiatives.
- To bring in changes to the attitude and practices of the targeted community through Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) to ensure investment of enhanced income towards children, breaking age-old harmful social and gender-based norms.

The New Horizon Plus initiative employs two key approaches to ensure a dignified life for adolescents and youths. The project aims to work with most vulnerable youths and adolescents and equip them with life skills (communication skills, higher order thinking skills, positive self-concept, self-control and social skills) and vocational skills, through Adolescent Skills for Successful Transitions approach to enable a shift out of poverty and deprivation. Additionally, the project also focuses on developing an enabling environment within households by ensuring access to social protection schemes, through Child Sensitive Social Protection approach, thereby ensuring an improvement in child led outcomes. The holistic approach contributes to breaking the inter-generational transfer of poverty.

The present study was conceptualised to understand social and gender base practices that restrict young girls’ successful transition to economic empowerment in the project intervention area.

The objectives of the KAP study are the following:

- To assess the knowledge level of adolescent, & youth (especially girls), parents, community members about skill building, SRHR and government social protection schemes
- To gauge the underlying social and genderbased perceptions among girls, boys, mother, father, caregivers, service providers and community members related to girls’ middle, secondary and higher education, SRHR, skilling, employment and marriage
- To comprehend the practice of girls, boys and their family members related to their education, skilling and employment and the social norms, social and cultural practices and behaviours that are considered to barriers in the path of girls and boys successful transition to adulthood.
- Provide recommendations to formulate the strategies leading to improved KAP of the target group and design an integrated intervention for the target group

To achieve the objectives, following table depicts the key research questions around the three key components of the study to be answered through the study.

<b>Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do the adolescent, &amp; youth (especially girls), parents, community members know about skill building, SRHR and about available private and government social protection schemes options and platforms?</li> <li>• Who are the “trusted voices” / “reference networks” that could effectively disseminate correct knowledge / beliefs and/or promote positive changes in attitudes and behaviours / practices?</li> <li>• What are the most effective means/ platforms of dissemination of the trusted voices?</li> </ul>
<b>Attitude</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the perceptions around the commonality / prevalence of SRHR, skill building and transition from school to higher studies to employment for girls and boys in the project locations?</li> <li>• What are the underlying social and gender based perceptions among girls, boys, mother, father, caregivers, service providers and community member related for girls’ education, SRHR, skilling, employment and marriage in the project location?</li> <li>• Do girls, mother or their parents feel safe to raise voice against existing perception on girls’ employment, travel for skilling and higher education?</li> <li>• What are underlying factors that restricting girls and boys to access skill building, SRHR services and employment opportunities in the project locations?</li> </ul>

**Practice**

- What are the practice of girls, boys and their family members related to their education, skilling and employment? (across the various socio-cultural and economic inter sections of the society in the project locations)
- What are the social norms, social and cultural practices and behaviours that are considered to barriers in the path of girls and boys successful transition to adulthood?

### 1.3 Literature Review

Employment is one of the cardinal areas that has suffered an unprecedented blow by the COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless of the job nature or employee as well as employer, the entire job world has experienced a phenomenal shock as a result of Covid-19 outbreak. The Center for Monitoring Indian Economy reported that the rate of unemployment in West Bengal is lower the all India data, and it has spiked to a large extent during the lockdown. The ramification was felt across the spectrum affecting different rungs of society.

According to the Mumbai-based think tank, the unemployment rate in West Bengal was 17.4 per cent in May while it was 23.5 per cent at the national level.<sup>7</sup> While specifying the youth, the unemployment rate among the youth (15-29 years) according to usual principal status by age-group and sex are mentioned below.<sup>8</sup>

Sector	male				female				persons			
	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-29	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-29	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-29
Year: 2011-12												
Rural												
West Bengal	213	89	44	100	108	147	110	122	193	100	54	103
All - India	114	69	28	61	80	99	58	78	105	76	34	65
Urban												
West Bengal	183	158	116	145	316	289	152	229	215	182	123	162
All - India	144	116	53	89	153	219	108	156	145	137	62	102

Source: NSS Report No. 554, 537, 515 (part 1), 458(part 1), 409

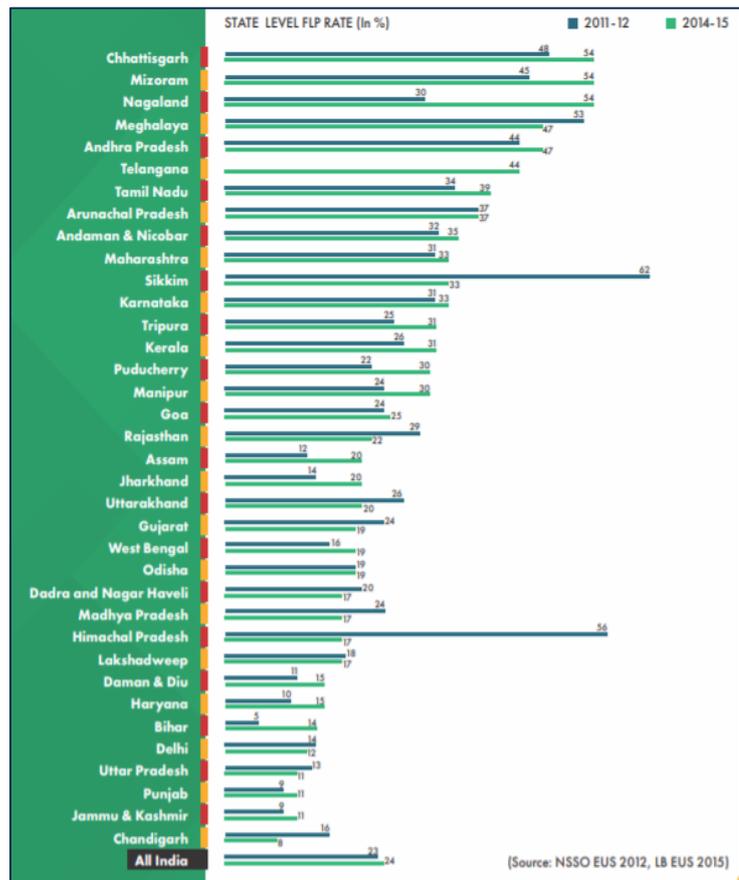
The Economic Survey of India pointed out that the gender gap in the Indian labour force participation of 2018 is more than 50 % points. In 2011, as per the last published National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) survey, the Workforce Participation Rate (proportion of labour force employed) at an all India level was 25.5 % for females and 1 53.3 % for males (MoSPI 2012). The Indian government has actively pursued labour market policies to increase Female Work/Labour-force Participation (FLWP) rate in India for several decades. The approach to policy has evolved from educational scholarships and reservations/quotas, to self-employment through self-help groups, to capacity building through skill training policies.

<sup>7</sup> <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/unemployment-rate-in-west-bengal-lower-than-country-cmie-data/articleshow/76220284.cms>

<sup>8</sup> DATABASE ON LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS OF WEST BENGAL -2

Challenges in effective implementation coupled with the inability to address deep-rooted social norms have constrained the impact of these policies on FLWP which continues to dip to dangerous levels. The rate of female labour force participation in West Bengal is only 19% compared to Chhattisgarh (65%), the highest performing state as on 2015.<sup>9</sup>

It is argued that low Labour force participation rate (LFP) of females in West Bengal is due to the fact that women are not involved in agriculture as much as in other states. Despite that, agriculture and allied sectors employ close to 42% of the rural female workforce in West Bengal. Study examines rural female work participation rates (WPR) in 4 districts within West Bengal using data from the Indian Census and finds that districts with better infrastructure and higher levels of education exhibit lower rural female WPR. While this may seem counter intuitive, it points to a troubling trend of female LFP in India as whole. Entry into the labor force does not appear to be a sign of empowerment, rather a sign of acute distress.



Despite the commonality of language and culture within the state of West Bengal, there is also considerable heterogeneity on the basis of caste and religion. Muslims, who form roughly 14% of the Indian population, make up more than 25% of the population of West Bengal. Muslim women had, and continue to have low rates of labor force participation. While there are some who argue that this is due to the conservative nature of the community that restricts women’s mobility, the evidence for this is largely anecdotal and not backed by data.<sup>10</sup>

One such anomaly to this norm are the districts of Murshidabad and South 24 Parganas where female LFPR is comparatively quite high. Chakraborty & Chakraborty (2010) use primary survey data to study how observable covariates such as education, ownership of land and age affect female LFPR in these districts, and also to study how much of the male female wage gap is attributable to differences in endowments or discrimination. They find that the high female LFPR in these two districts is due to the concentration of women in home-based self-employment. However, they find that both Muslim men and women in these districts earn lower wages indicating lack of access to well-paying jobs for members of this community. These issues point to the complex nature of discrimination faced by women in heterogeneous state such as West Bengal. This discrimination is mediated not only through the lens of gender, but also through multiple layers of caste, religion and ethnicity. A recognition of the multi-faceted nature of this exclusion is critical to understanding both the presence and absence of women from the labor force in West Bengal.

<sup>9</sup> FEMALE WORK AND LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION IN INDIA - A Meta-Study  
<sup>10</sup> [file:///D:/IPSOS%20NEW/IPSOS%20NEW/Projects/KAP\\_Save%20the%20Children/Report/WB-%20BD%20Paper\\_Long%20abstract.pdf](file:///D:/IPSOS%20NEW/IPSOS%20NEW/Projects/KAP_Save%20the%20Children/Report/WB-%20BD%20Paper_Long%20abstract.pdf)

Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) – Annual Report (July, 2018 – June, 2019) shows a positive increase in participation among female workers in both urban and rural in 2018-19 compared to last year.

Highest level of education successfully completed										
Category of persons	Not literate	Literate & up to primary	Middle	Secondary	Higher secondary	Diploma/certificate course	Graduate	Post graduate and above	Secondary & above	All
				PLFS, 2018-19						
				Rural						
Male	76.5	85.6	74.7	60.5	55.8	66.4	69.1	75.4	61.3	72.2
Female	30.7	29.8	21	17.2	13.8	34.3	18.4	31.5	17.1	25.5
Person	46.7	58.4	51.7	42.9	38.6	57.4	50.2	59	43.7	48.9
				Urban						
Male	72.6	80.2	73.1	60.6	52.3	73.7	69.5	79.9	63.8	68.6
Female	21.9	20.6	15.9	9.9	9.5	34	23.1	36.8	17.3	18.4
Person	38	49.6	46.2	37.8	32.5	63.3	49.1	59.5	43.1	43.9

The social hierarchy plays an essential role in women's participation in the labor market. Usually lower caste women historically often worked outside their home. The quality of jobs was usually low and menial. However, their work provided them with both incomes as well as independence which made them confident. A study by Luke and Munshi (2011) found that newer opportunities benefit the historically disadvantageous groups as they are more responsive to these various new opportunities (like an increase in income of female workers). This is mainly because they have fewer ties to the traditional economy to hold them back. Freedom from various restrictions, inhibitions, and class consciousness cause the FWPR to be higher for the backward classes.

Mainly the factors determining FLPR can be classified into supply and demand factors. Factors that impact women by staying at home like rising household income (Chand & Srivastava, 2014; Klasen & Pieters, 2015; Sorsa et al., 2015), and selectivity of highly educated women (Sorsa et al., 2015), are the supply factors whereas the demand side factors mostly determine the availability of jobs like expansion of the sectors that absorb female workers (Klasen & Pieters, 2015; Lahoti & Swaminathan, 2016). According to Kannan and Raveendran (2012) and Kapsos, Silbermann, and Bourmpoula (2014), the sluggish growth of agriculture and the absence of nonfarm jobs are significant factors for declining participation of women in rural areas.

Women's participation in the labour force has long been central to research on gender inequalities. Much of this research has sought to find out how and to what extent labour force participation contributes to women's empowerment and well-being and reduction of gender inequalities. Scholars on gender inequality emphasise the importance of women's economic role in determining their position in other spheres, from household bargaining to representation in state governance. Empirical research has found that women's labour force participation is associated with less bias against the girl child within the family, reduced mortality and better health for girl children, and with more voice in some areas of household decision making. Of course, several conditions may limit the liberating impacts of work outside the household (e.g., who controls the income from such work), and, even in the best of circumstances, outside work usually implies a dual burden for wives and mothers which forces them to balance the responsibilities as homemaker and outside work. Still, it is less often highlighted that women's labour force participation sometimes may actually restrain women's progress toward more equality. More women's labor force participation under economic stress may lead to girls being withdrawn from school and put to such work as domestic chores and sibling care; the burden of work imposed on girls early in their life may restrict their schooling, which widens the gender gap in basic education and further widens, in turn, the gap in labour market opportunities. None of these linkages is inevitable, though. Nevertheless, the general pattern across India provides a cautionary message and reminds us of the multidimensionality of gender stratification.

Hence a detailed critical analysis of gender norms and social practices were felt essential in order to understand the determinants that are restricting girl's empowerment.

## 1.4 Data collection Methods

The research design employed a participatory, action-oriented, gender focussed methodology. As specified- Qualitative research design was adopted to gather the primary research amongst multi-layered stakeholders. The study had implemented Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) with different projective techniques to best capture the gender norms and social practices around KAP. This approach was developed keeping in consideration a shift in paradigm from top-down to bottom-up approach.

The mode of sampling for this qualitative research was purposive with snowball sampling in approach. The respondents were identified based on set parameters.

- In case of conducting the FGDs- only six members were included in each group to maintain the social distancing during this pandemic time. Gender mapping exercise was conducted in each of the groups by the respective moderators.
- One-to-one interviews were conducted while conducting the KII and IDI with the selected respondents at different locations. The interviews were conducted at the convenient location and time as being shared by the respondents.
- While conducting the Outlier Case Studies and Intergenerational Trios the interactions were held in closed-door situation by maintaining the norms of privacy and confidentiality was maintained by the team.

Each of the qualitative method has a definite purpose in data collection.

The table below highlights major reasons behind choosing each of the research methods by directly linking it to study objectives:

Proposed tool/Methods	Purpose
Focus Group Discussions-FGD (with girls and boys separately)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To capture local definitions of adolescence, masculinity and femininity;</li> <li>• To capture local norms of what it means to be a good (or bad) boy/girl; to capture local norms and expectations around marriage and education, and how each affects the other</li> <li>• To explore adolescents' reference groups (in terms of enforcing social norms)</li> <li>• To understand what do the adolescent, &amp; youth (especially girls) know about skill building, SRHR and about available private and government social protection schemes options and platforms?</li> <li>• To explore who are the "trusted voices" / "reference networks" that could effectively disseminate correct knowledge / beliefs and/or promote positive changes in attitudes and behaviour / practices</li> <li>• To understand what do the community members know about skill building, SRHR and about available private and government social protection schemes and platforms</li> <li>• Gender mapping</li> </ul>
Key Informant Interview- KII	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To capture views of different stakeholders on the social and political context, as well as impact of programmes and policies; to explore local histories, trends and changes over time.</li> <li>• To understand the perceptions around the commonality / prevalence of SRHR, skill building and transition from school to higher studies to employment for girls and boys in the project locations</li> <li>• To understand the social norms, social and cultural practices and behaviours that are considered to barriers in the path of girls and boys successful transition to adulthood</li> <li>• To understand what do the community members know about skill building, SRHR and about available private and government social protection schemes options and platforms</li> </ul>

Proposed tool/Methods	Purpose
<b>Intergenerational Trio</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To capture different views of members of the same family (spanning three generations) around social norms and expectations of boys and girls/men and women; and around marriage and education, employment</li> <li>To understand what do the adolescent, &amp; youth (especially girls), parents, community members know about skill building, SRHR and about available private and government social protection schemes options and platforms?</li> <li>What are underlying factors that restricting girls and boys to access skill building, SRHR services and employment opportunities in the project locations?</li> <li>To understand Who are the “trusted voices” / “reference networks” that could effectively disseminate correct knowledge / beliefs and/or promote positive changes in attitudes and behaviours / practices</li> </ul>
<b>In Depth Interviews-IDI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand the existing dynamics in the intervention areas</li> <li>It will explore the in-depth opinion of the respondent's point of view, experiences, feelings, perspectives and requirements in reference to the objectives of the project.</li> <li>It will create a friendly environment for people to fill out their ideas and thought, thus the results and feedbacks can be obtained more easily and accurately.</li> </ul>
<b>Outlier Case Study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To explore the life history of individuals; this can reveal the different pathways people choose in either conforming to or defying prevailing gender norms, and the consequences of doing so.</li> </ul>

## 1.5 Geographical Coverage

The study coverage was 8 wards of Kamarhati Municipality under Kolkata UA, 8 wards of Kolkata Municipal Corporation and targeted gram panchayat of Sumatinagar II in Sagar block of South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal being the intervention areas of the project.

Locations	
<b>Urban</b>	Kamarhati of Kamarhati Urban Local Bodies under Kolkata UA
	Metiabruz of Kolkata Municipal Corporation
<b>Rural</b>	Dhaspara, Sumatinagar-II Gram Panchayat, Sagar block of South 24 Parganas

**Kamarhati:** Kamarhati Municipality is one of the densely populated municipalities among the 38 municipalities of Commissionerate of Municipal Administration CMA. The total population of 8 Wards - 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 is 1,15,430 as with 47 percent females and 53 percent males as per Census 2011. The population of SC and ST is very less (1.5% -0.8%) compared to total population. The intervention wards of Kamarhati have 82,078 literate people of which 55 percent are male while 45 percent are female. The ward has around 27 percent workforce population with only 12 percent females as compared to 89 percent males in the labour market. The distribution of male and female casual is 54 and 46 percent respectively.

The location was the hub of jute industries. The other major economic establishment were such as engineering, ceramics, textiles and match industries. But there has been some industrial concern resulting closing down of the factories like Texaco- Textiles and wagon industries, Wimco match factories, Bengal porcelain, Mohini Mill-textiles.

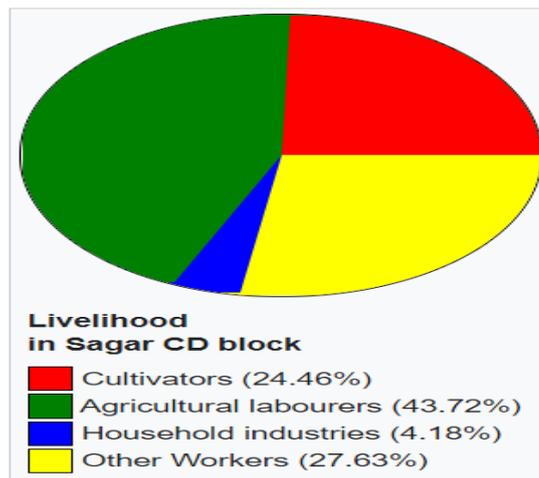
<p>Ward Nos. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 &amp; 8 of Kamarhati Municipality under Kolkata UA</p>	<p>Ward 79,80,133,134,135,136,138 &amp; 141 of Kolkata Municipal Corporation</p>	<p>Four villages (Sumati Nagar, Bankim Nagar, Mittuanjay Nagar, Haradhanpur) under Dhaspara-Sumatinagar – II Gram Panchayat of Sagar Block, South 24 Parganas.</p>

**Kolkata Municipal Corporation-** The population of 8 wards (Ward 79,80,133,134,135,136,138, 141) under KMC is 2,61,515. The male and female populations are 1,22,394 and 1,39,121 respectively. Only 5 percent of the population belongs to Schedule Caste. Collectively only 35 percent of the total population is involved in work force with 85 percent male and 15 percent female in labour force. The literacy rate indicates 44 percent female and 56 percent male literates within the ward.

The population of these wards consists mainly of Muslim. The primary spoken languages include Urdu, Hindi and Bengali within the coverage area. There are plenty of ancillary workshops in and around these wards.

**Sagar Block, South 24 Parganas-** Sagar as a community development block that forms an administrative division in Kakdwip subdivision of South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. As per the Census 2011, Sagar has a total population of 212,037 with 109,468 males and 102,569 females with 27 percent SC population. Three fourth of the total population is literate in Sagar of which the literacy of male and female are 56 percent and 44 percent respectively. A very nominal percentage (3%) of people are working as casual labourer in Sagar. The rate of male workers is much higher (73%) compared to female (27%) participation.

The percentage of households below poverty line was 44.46 percent<sup>11</sup>. The livelihood status of the block is shown in the figure.<sup>12</sup>



<sup>11</sup>Human Development Report

<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sagar\\_\(community\\_development\\_block\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sagar_(community_development_block))

## 1.6 Target Respondents and Samples

The following were the target respondents for conducting the qualitative interactions and discussion.

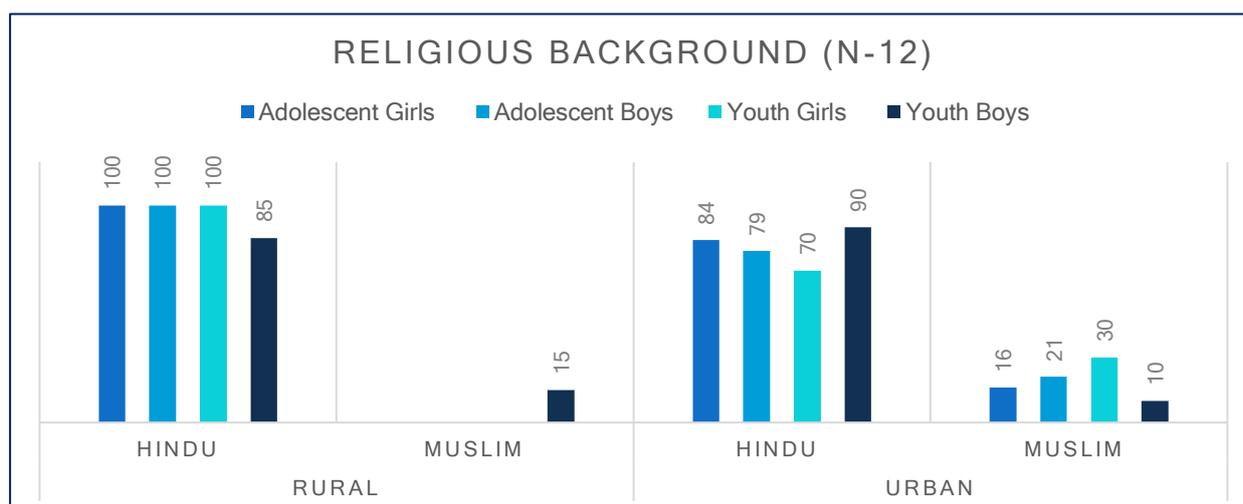


### The methods and samples achieved for KAP study

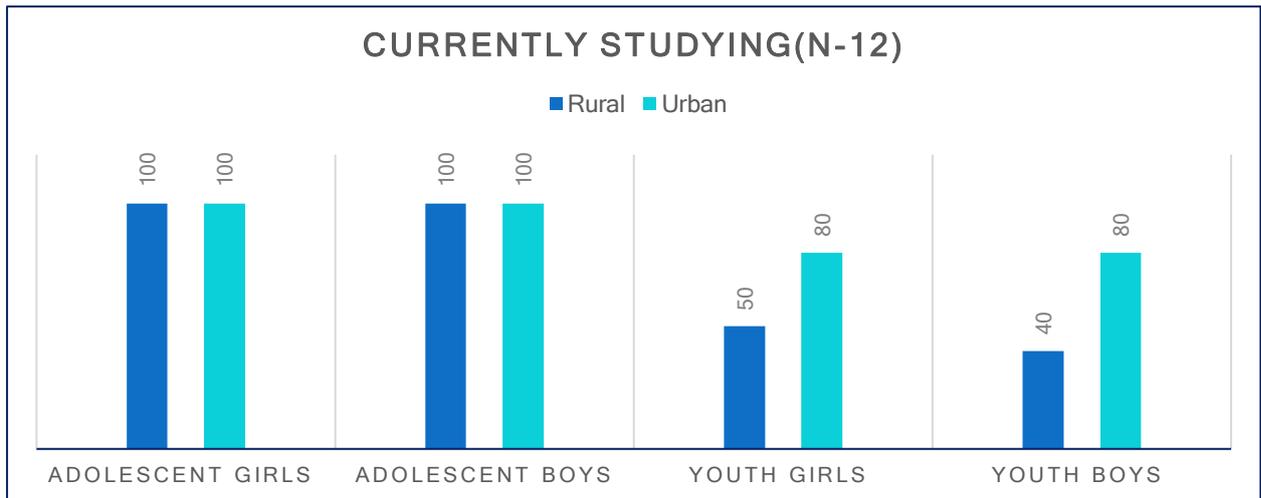
Methods	Samples Achieved
Focus Group Discussions-FGD (with adolescents and youths- girls and boys separately) and SHGs	26
Key Informant Interview-KII with stakeholders	11
Intergenerational Trio	6
In Depth Interviews-IDI with implementers	3
Outlier Case Study	5

The profile of the adolescents and youth members being interviewed during the KAP study is specified below.

In both urban and rural areas, majority of youth and adolescent respondents belong to Hindu families. The percentage of Muslim respondents were relatively higher in urban than rural.



While enquired of their current educational status, it was found that all the adolescent boys and girls interviewed are continuing their education irrespective of urban or rural setup. In case of youth, respondents from urban are more into education than rural. There is no significant difference between youth boys and girls who are currently studying.



In addition to the above, Gender Mapping was conducted amongst the adolescents and youths (N=144) to assess their KAP regarding various gender components at home and outside.

The diagram shown here, was used to gauge the perceptions of youth and adolescent group regarding gender stereotyped roles.

Understanding Gender roles

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

- Who take responsibilities inside home for boys and girls? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who take responsibilities in earning for the family? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who get more advantages in daily life? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who can take part in the decision making Within the family? \_\_\_\_\_
- In terms of outing, who gets more advantage? \_\_\_\_\_
- In terms of clothing who can choose their own taste? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who enjoy more leisure timing? \_\_\_\_\_
- In terms of education who gets much more exposure? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who have more physical strength ? \_\_\_\_\_
- In case of occupation, who has the right to choose their own choice? \_\_\_\_\_

Each of the statements were explained to each of the youth and adolescent interviewed and they have been asked to rate each of the statement in a scale of 1-10 for male and female separately.

Data were entered to get the overall analysis on the findings during the KAP study.

The statements of the qualitative findings were categorised into knowledge, practice, attitudes, perceptions and were rated to get the overall numbers and corresponding percentages for the primary target respondents of the study.

## 1.7 Processes Ensuring Ethical Guidelines

Ethical guidelines and protocols were followed while conducting the data collection as well as during the process of analysis. The following steps were followed as part of the ethical guidelines:

- Ethical practices include explaining the risks and benefits of participation in the research to the respondents. Specific emphasis was laid on privacy, confidentiality of data, voluntary participation, right to withdraw and anonymity aspects.
- One of the most critical ethical guidelines is the respect for respondents participating in the survey which was sincerely followed in terms of prior appointment, availability, convenient time and location for the interaction.
- It refers to the respect of the autonomy and self-determination of all human beings; acknowledging their dignity and freedom, being followed sincerely by the team.
- Ipsos as an agency had strictly adhered to the Child Safeguarding Policy and ethical guidelines. The orientation on the same was provided by Save the Children and had signed the Save the Children's Child Safeguarding Policy.
- Male researcher was part of the male FGDs while the same was maintained for females too.
- Prior permission was taken for clicking photographs and audio recording of the conversation prior to initiating the interviews.
- Anonymity and confidentiality of respondents' data was being maintained.
- Ipsos being an ISO 20252 certified agency, follows certain guidelines to ensure adherence to ethical practices for all social research/surveys that involves human subjects or guidelines governing research ethics.
- The basic principle governing the ethical conduct of research is Informed Consent which was strictly followed and being signed by the respondents.
- Data protection protocols was developed for the storage of the audio files and transcripts.
- All transcripts were properly labelled.

## 1.8 Challenges and Limitation in Implementation of Assignment

Overall, the study was smooth in terms of conceptualization, data collection, analysis and co-ordination with the respondents and stakeholders.

Going by the background, objectives and implementation process there was hardly any limitation while conducting the KAP study across all the three locations being the coverage areas of the project.

# Chapter 2: Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP): Findings and Analysis

This chapter provides key insights about the intended project participants related to the key components of the New Horizon Plus Program pertaining to the knowledge level about educational opportunities, skill building, SRHR, social protection schemes and Government programmes. The qualitative exercise helped to explore the underlying social and gender practices among the primary stakeholders related to education, employment & entrepreneurship, skilling, and SRHR and social protection schemes. The prevalent knowledge, attitude, social as well as cultural practices and behaviours in the community were assessed to understand the barriers, deterrents as well as motivators for successful transition of the adolescents to adulthood.

Efforts were taken to quantify the responses of the respondents being canvassed during the KAP study segregating into rural and urban scenarios. The primary respondents were the adolescent (15 to 17 years) and youth (18 to 24 years) while the secondary were community members including the religious leaders, parents, trainers, panchayat and SHG members from the respective localities.

## 2.1 Education

Attaining basic education is recognized as a key driver of social and financial change across the surveyed adolescent and youth irrespective of both the areas. The adolescents and youth of the urban and rural areas stated that they feel completing basic education is essential for improving their prospects for getting meaningful employment. This is validated with the fact that these respondents (female and male) are enrolled in regular government affiliated schools with the grade 11 being the highest for females and grade 12 for males. During the FGDs it was indicated that none of the FGD participants were dropouts and when probed about their dreams, they indicated that they want to be engaged in employment such as beautician, teacher, policeman, bank professional. Although there are schools in the locality and almost all children are initially enrolled, the FGD participants also indicated that most of the students in the community do not pursue higher education (Graduation/Masters') or even dropout after 10<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> standard due to the constraints of transforming into an earning member. This therefore deprives them of the opportunity to pursue higher education and empower themselves to progress towards enhancing their academic qualifications and thereby strive towards economic and social upliftment.

The findings of the interaction with youth, adolescent and community members have been presented in the matrix below whereby the key findings have been quantified to the extent possible to understand how differently the responses varied in urban and rural context in terms of interest of education, importance of education along with girls', perception of male on girl's education, reason for discontinuing girls' education.

Categories	Rural (%)					Urban(%)				
	Adolescent Girls	Youth Girls	Adolescent Boys	Youth Boys	Community member	Adolescent Girls	Youth Girls	Adolescent Boys	Youth Boys	Community member
<b>Interest of education</b>										
Desire to attain higher education	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Importance of education</b>										
Feel completing basic education is essential for improving their standard of living and for getting better livelihood	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Perception of males on girls' education</b>										
Females in the community cannot pursue higher education as they are being married of and responsible for household chores.	73	89	90	85	100	80	91	77	80	90
Financial condition and location of institutions act as deterrents	90	100	100	100	80	76	89	80	90	90
Females in the community are discouraged from pursuing higher education as they believe that women are more suited for household chores	75	89	90	95	75	79	91	77	80	95
Girls are more progressive in terms of attaining education	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Importance of girls' education</b>										
Feels there is need for girls to study	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Feels since there are better facilities and have more exposure for girls, so they need to study	90	100	85	100	90	80	90	80	100	100
There should not be any difference between boys and girls education	79	85	80	100	100	80	100	90	100	100
<b>Reasons of discontinuity of education for girls</b>										
Financial constraints	100	100	100	100	80	80	100	100	100	78
Girls are not allowed to travel distantly to attain higher education	100	100	100	100	75	100	100	100	100	90
Peer pressure and poor economic condition of the families which forces them to start working instead of pursuing higher studies	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Girls get married early and so discontinue education	100	100	100	90	90	100	90	90	100	90
<b>Total Number</b>	N=12	N=12	N=12	N=12	N=14	N=21	N=24	N=23	N=23	N=18

In both the urban areas male respondents were found to have completed elementary education and instance of attending private schools was also found during the study. The response from the youth group also mirrored with the findings of the adolescent group. Out of these only one male youth is pursuing graduation while the rest of them are engaged in some part-time work engagement in their locality or elsewhere. The situation amongst the females is encouraging as all the respondents indicated that either they are pursuing higher education or have completed primary education. Respondents of the female adolescent groups were found to be school goers and interested in studies. Aspiration of pursuing higher studies is evident as expressed by the youths. This will help them in securing better job/employment opportunities.

*We started working along with education and I used to play football so I used to earn some money. If I can earn money then I can get the tuition fees and the college fees also. The elder brother couldn't study much. He studied till 8 or 9. After that there is a brother who was working and the other brother is getting ready for and he was doing BCom. The elder brother completed BCom and now he is trying for a job in TCS.*

One of the problems highlighted by both the female and male youth groups in the urban areas was the incidents of dropouts due to peer pressure and poor economic condition of the families which pressurizes them to get into employment instead of pursuing higher studies. An adolescent boy from urban group expressed his desire to reach a better position than his parents with the help of education.

*My father is illiterate, but I am studying as I want to become a Police Officer. I want to lead a dignified life than my parents.*

In rural area of South 24 Parganas district of Sagar all the male respondents being part of this KAP study were found to have completed secondary education. One male youth was pursuing graduation but dropped out due to financial constraints. In the female youth group 50 percent of them indicated to have completed secondary education. All the male respondents indicated that they are currently enrolled or have been enrolled in school and the highest education attainment being that of 12<sup>th</sup> standard. All of them also indicated that they want to be engaged in professional employment ventures such as railways, teacher, sportsperson or run their own business. Among the female adolescents, more than 90 percent respondents indicated that they want to become nurse and one wants to become a teacher. Among the male youth, 60 percent have completed at least elementary education while the percentage was 80 amongst the female counterparts with one of them pursuing her graduation. An encouraging finding from the area was found whereby the

#### **Carrying the load to earn and support family at all costs!**

This Metiabruz youth is one of four siblings. He had to drop out of school in the 8<sup>th</sup> standard due to financial constraints and started working as a van driver to support the family. He believes that for young boys in his locality the unemployment rate is extremely high. Every family has 4-5 children and the income is very limited hence they are hardly able to put the children through high school or college. Therefore, most young boys tend to drop out early so that they can start earning and support their families. However, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> standard pass outs hardly get very lucrative positions and have to settle for low paying jobs like tailoring, driving, labor or small businesses. They often work for 8-9 hours earning as little as Rs.300. When boys see the poverty in their families, they feel pressurized from 8<sup>th</sup> standard onwards that they must do something to improve the family's condition. Even those who could study further notice that others are dropping out and earning so they also follow. Basically, there is huge expectation from boys to take care of their parents, wives and kids and if they are not able to provide enough, they have immense guilt. This leads many to migrate to other states or even gulf countries to earn more money although it keeps them separated from the family.

adolescent males mentioned that they believe girls should get proper education and pursue their career by getting a job. Among the male youth in the rural area, their aspiration ranges from securing a government job (railways, teacher, army), operating their own business or working in the agricultural farm. Among the female youth only two of the respondents indicated that they aspire to be in the nursing profession. It also came out that the government schemes such as “Kanyashree” and “Rupashree” are encouraging the families to keep the girl children enrolled in schools and complete their education.

*In contrast, in one of the FGDs, it was stated by the girls that “in order to do job in the city we need permission and most of the time we do not get permission to go out and do job and thus are not much interested to pursue further’.*

An encouraging facet is that across urban and rural areas both the adolescent and youth believe that equal opportunities exist in education for both males and females. However, an interesting aspect arises from the urban localities where the male adolescent and youth believe that females in the community are discouraged from pursuing higher education as they believe that women are more suited for household chores. Also in the rural area, a similar sentiment is echoed where it is stated that although equal education opportunities exist, youth especially females are discouraged from pursuing higher education due to the lack of any gainful employment opportunities.

Interaction with local councilor representatives in the urban areas revealed that a lot of change is now seeping into the society and more and more females are now enrolled in colleges.

*“The Muslim ladies have come forward for education and their number is increasing as more girls from the community are encouraged to pursue higher education. Now the good sign is that the females from Muslim families have come forward and are trying to become independent.” - The local councilor*

Similarly, the community members in rural area were also of the same opinion whereby the panchayat representative added- *“More girls are getting educated than boys and also seen amongst the Muslim community”*. One challenge highlighted by him is that even if adolescent or youth of the area are interested to get educated there are very limited options for higher education.

*“There is only one college which is approximately 17 kms away with limited number of seats and getting an admission is really difficult as it is very competitive in nature.”*

This acts as a deterrent to the youth of the area in pursuing higher education.

*He also mentioned that there drop-out is an issue as most families are financially weak and therefore feel that “it is not necessary to send the child to school and get education rather he can go to someone’s house and do some work and can earn Rs.2000 per month.”*

Clear instances of girls dropping out of promising careers were shared during the discussions by the girls from the rural areas.

It is therefore observed from this study that despite the existence of equal education opportunities (schools) across urban and rural area, there is a clear gender stereotyping especially in the urban areas where it is felt that educating girls is not worthwhile as they will ultimately be married off. Though a similar gender stereotyping exists in the rural areas, it is observed that females are still enrolled and encouraged to complete secondary education due to the benefits received through the “Kanyashree”

scheme. This itself validates the notion that completion of education for girls is considered important not for empowerment but for receiving financial dole which can be used for marriage purposes.

## 2.2 Employment and Entrepreneurship

One of the key aspects of the study was to understand the existing pattern of occupation and available employment opportunities in the intervention areas of the program and underlying gender & social norms related to it.

In the urban locations the respondents of the FGDs indicated that their fathers are engaged in the informal sector with the primary occupations being labourer, driver, watchman, casual jute mill worker and running their own shop (tea stall). Only one male adolescent indicated that his father is working in a government job as a policeman. While getting to understand respondents' occupational pattern, it was found that the urban youths are presently engaged in the informal sector which varied from place to place. In both the urban locations, youths and other stakeholders expressed the dearth of job opportunities at local level..

*"I want to earn so much that my parents and my family will be happy with it. I will have to take care of them and my relatives shouldn't say that our son doesn't take care of us. I have so many plans but how can I implement it, we are all unemployed here with no income"-Youth FGD, Kamarhati.*

Seasonal employment in informal sector was also stated by the urban youths. While only two female youths were found to be engaged in informal employment. The female adolescent from the urban areas indicated that they want to work in the future as this not only contributes to family income but also provides them with stability and independence. However, one group of female adolescents also indicated that they are not encouraged to seek employment as the family belief is that girls should stay at home and do household chores and it was more found with the Muslim families while interacting with the girls from Kamarhati.

*'My father says that only he will work. Nobody else will go out and work. I sometimes ask my father should I search for a job he says no, you do not have to work outside, take care of household work'*

Interestingly, all male adolescent groups in urban area indicated that they feel that girls should be allowed to work which will aid the family income. Simultaneously, there was a mixed response whereby 40 percent of the male adolescents indicated that girls should be allowed to work whereas the remaining 60 percent mentioned that girls should stay at home. One of the key considerations was that they think it is unsafe for the women to work outside. One member also cited the religious aspect of "Purdah" wherein it is mandated that women should always stay in the house and not mingle with outsiders especially males which might happen in a workplace. The urban male youths were of the opinion that girls are now getting equal opportunities to study and seek employment. It was also stated that they feel there should be no restriction about the type of employment that females of the area may seek. It was found that female urban youth do want to study and be engaged in some employment venture. But they are not too hopeful of employment opportunities in the future as the perceived notion in the families is that females should stay at home.

In one of the male youth FGDs, they indicated that the idea of females going out to work is not appreciated in the community and this was also validated by the indication that they would always prefer a non-working life partner who can take care of the household chores. Contrastingly 42 percent of the male youth indicated that many girls of the area are working in call centers. The female youth of urban locations encouragingly indicated that they want to be engaged in some income generating activities.

They, however, also indicated that they do not get the support from the family if they desire to be involved in such activities.

In order to represent the findings in the areas of employment and business pattern, opportunities etc. in a structured manner, the following table provides an urban-rural comparison of the responses received from youth and adolescent boys and girls and from the community members.

The intergenerational trio conducted with both male and female members from the urban areas corroborates this fact. Both the male and female members indicated that the male members are the ones entrusted with income generating responsibilities while the female are entrusted with household responsibilities. It was evident that elderly female person of family or mother of adolescents and youth girls only allows as well as motivates girls to take job or link with income generation activities if they have a history of income generation in their own young age. Interactions with local businessmen of the urban areas revealed that they feel there are increasing opportunities for skilled labour in electronic goods repairing, IT, hospitality and jute mills. With rapid urbanization, push towards digital tools and renewed interest in jute products, these avenues may provide gainful employment to the youth of the areas more towards females. They believed young girls are fast learners, interested to learn new avenues and more keen to have their earnings.

The study therefore reveals that there is a gap between the primary stakeholders and the elders of the community in the urban areas. Although the male youth and adolescent state as established above that they think that females now have equal employment opportunities and they have no issues with the females seeking employment. They also realize the cultural practices and family pressure will not allow most of the women to pursue gainful employment opportunities. On the contrary, most of the females interacted with revealed that they are eager to get employed as they realize that this will not only lead to financial gain but also allow them to have greater voice and independence which they do not have presently.

In rural area, male and female adolescents indicated that the primary employment avenue for the families is working in the farm sector which includes cultivation, betel leaf rearing and fishing. Everybody in the respective groups of males and females also indicated that they want to be get a job when they become adults and contribute towards family income. The males indicated a preference towards starting their own shop, getting a government or a private job while most of the adolescent girls indicated that they want to pursue nursing career. Of the total male respondents, here, one-third of the youth group members were found to be engaged in informal work to support their families. Among the male youth, all indicated that they aim to start earning for the family while four of the female youth indicated that they are interested to enroll themselves in vocational training courses including beautician and tailoring. Among the male youths only two male youth and one female youth are currently engaged in some form of employment (labourer, farm worker). It was also indicated that owing to the twin pandemic condition of post Amphan cyclone and Covid-19, a lot of the youth of the area have lost their regular job and are now working as labourers under the MGNREGA scheme or driving local transport. Presently there are no widespread employment opportunities and therefore it is a worrying issue for the local youths of the area. Even the panchayat member expressed the concern of unemployment of the youth in this area.

The CSO member was of the opinion that- *“Even if an educated youth tries to earn money by providing private tuition, there is hardly any families who could afford to pay the tuition fees on a regular basis. This limited scope of work is severely demotivating the youth and therefore most of them are unwilling to study beyond grade 10 or 12 knowing that they will end up working in the fields or as daily wage labourers. It is very important that they get into enterprise development in proper manner under the guidance of experienced entrepreneurs.”*

The opinion of the youth in terms of the employment and business opportunities are depicted below under various heads.

Categories	Rural (%)					Urban(%)				
	Adolescent Girls	Youth Girls	Adolescent Boys	Youth Boys	Community member	Adolescent Girls	Youth Girls	Adolescent Boys	Youth Boys	Community member
<b>Pattern of employment or business</b>										
Informal sector as the primary occupation of the areas	100	100	100	100	100	100	85	78	90	60
<b>Employment/business Opportunities</b>										
Opportunities for male are more	100	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	100	50
Opportunities for female are more	58	62	65	78	100	50	60	60	50	100
<b>Aspiration of girls</b>										
Girls aspire to support their families	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Financial independence is needed for girls	60	100	75	100	100	75	100	50	100	100
Enabling environment to look for job or continue job	100	100	100	100	89	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Reasons of discontinuing job /business</b>										
Girls are not allowed to travel distantly for job	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	60
Unsafe public transport					100	100	100	100	100	50
Education attainment is not commensurate with job available	100	100	100	100	90	100	100	100	100	100
After marriage, girls are supposed to focus on household chores	80	80	100	100	100	80	90	100	100	60
<b>Total Number</b>	N=12	N=12	N=12	N=12	N=14	N=21	N=24	N=23	N=23	N=18

In the rural areas along with gender stereotyping restricting women from seeking gainful employment, it is also the lack of employment opportunities that hinder the females from exploring and pursuing employment. The elders of the rural area opine that household chores is the sole domain of the women and they can additionally help by working in the limited income earning opportunities such as farming. Moreover, it was also observed that most the elders seek marriage prospects for women from outside the rural areas with the expectation that in the urban or peri-urban areas the quality of life will improve.

**From brick laying to E-commerce – fighting all odds to chase her dreams!**

Shyamali Mondal is presently a little over 22 years and hails from Sumatinagar. She grew up amidst major economic struggles in her household with 3 siblings. Her father did not have any consistent source of income and her mother being physically challenged, could not work. Her sisters got married early while her brother still resides with the grandparents. Their mud house was destroyed during the 2009 flood and soon after her parents left in search of work to Tamil Nadu. She struggled to complete her high school education and even continued till IInd year of college but had to dropout due to financial constraints. Shyamali's parents were against her studying and wanted her to get married. She resisted and continued the studies to fulfil her aspirations. She started brick laying work to earn some money and put herself through school. She also did labour work in others houses to sustain herself.

She would work all day and study during the evenings. Despite that it wasn't possible to complete her education. However, she did manage to move to Kolkata in 2017 and started working first with an insurance company then as a receptionist at a computer institute and then into marketing. She went from earning Rs.4,000 to Rs.7,200. In 2019 she moved to Pashcim Midnapur where she found a job in e-commerce that earned her upto Rs.22,000 per month. Her family including her younger brother depend on her income now. Although she had to return during the lockdown, she wishes to start her own business in the village and keep earning.

With her success, her father's views and attitude have changed. He no longer restricts her from going out and does not beat her mother anymore. She is able to ask him to be on better terms with the family since she is supporting the family. Shyamali is a role model in her community amongst her peer group.

There has not been much change in the employment opportunities available to the communities in both the urban and rural areas surveyed as part of this study. Although seeking gainful employment is a priority, lack of proper opportunities along with limited educational attainment severely hampers the ability of the youth attaining formal employment. Addition to this, majority of youth girls and boys leave their jobs due to peer pressure, irrational life expectations, family pressure in alignment with their gender roles -being a male member of the family. It is assumed by family members that youth boys have to earn huge money per month to provide family members a luxurious life instantly joining the job. But if the boys are unable to earn much, they are not considered as a responsible male member of the family. This stigma cannot be handled by youth boys as they easily leave jobs for earning more money. In case of females, they are instructed by elderly person or male members that she is supposed to do all household chores of the family before going out for work. Being the lady of the household, she is equally responsible for all household chores and strike a balance at her workplace. Moreover, when she is late the public transports are not safe for her and she has to spend additional amount on commuting.

The insight into the educational background, aspirations, employment opportunities and skill building leads to a downbeat entrepreneurial landscape across the urban and rural areas covered through this study. All male and female members across the urban and rural areas during the Intergenerational Trios indicated that although the scope of employment has improved and different types of work is now available but there has been no significant improvement in entrepreneurship. This is primarily linked to lack of the necessary skills in setting up and operating a business, lack of financial capital and guidance.

## 2.3 Skill Building

The skill building programs varied in urban and rural locations based on the need, interest areas and based on the demand of the trait. The adolescents and youths from the surveyed areas are clearly disadvantaged in terms of both life skills and professional skills which can aid in transitioning to gainful employment. As indicated in the employment section above, most of the trades which are taken up mostly by males in the urban areas are limited to the informal sector including driving, tailoring, jute mill worker, security guard etc. while in the rural areas it is limited to cultivation, fishery and daily wage labourer.

Discussions during the Intergenerational Trio in the urban areas indicated that some female youth of the area have undertaken beautician course which however has not translated to employment. There is also a prevailing perception that there are no government schemes towards skill building of the youth which indicates lack of information amongst the community.

None of the youth groups except one group of females and one group of males indicated awareness of skill building or entrepreneurial programs in their areas. The female group have undergone a three-day training course and feel that with additional training they may be able to initiate some business either individually or as a group and start contributing to the family income. The male members expressed the desire to undergo skill building training programs so that they can start their own enterprise or seek employment.

During the interaction with the youth in urban areas it was found that they were interested to be engaged in the hotel and catering industry or AC mechanic. This is primarily because they have seen a lot of the youth from the area already engaged especially in the hotel and catering industry. Interaction with the female youth indicated that their priority is on service industry. Being influenced by community beliefs and customs is not really focused on enhancing their skills through various skill development programmes. An interesting facet of the interactions is that a lot of the youth want an easy job with limited working hours and good salary. Another important factor was the involvement of New Horizon Alumni who acted as role model in their locality and younger groups were similarly interested to pursue the skill of hospitality management. A few of them stated that mechanic being the sought-after trades. This is primarily because a lot of youth from the community are already engaged in these trades to earn their living. In contrast the opinion leader stated-*"It is not wise to spend money for professional courses like hospital management as we have experienced that some youth took training in hotel management but now have to work in meagre jobs in the locality"*. But the trainer of the institute contradicts with the statement and shared-*"the expectation of the youth and their families are too much. One cannot be successful and earn a large amount immediately in hospitality industry. One needs to have patience and sincerity. Youths have to be equally trained to imbibe the soft skill."*

An entrepreneur being a union leader of the Shop Keeper Forum stated- *"there is ample scope for initiating skill building programs in the area specifically focused on electronic goods repairing, jute products and basic IT skills. If youths of the locality are being convinced properly -we will not take people from outside. The girls, their parents are to be motivated so that they are being involved effectively so that we get our business and they earn substantially for their families."*

In the urban areas, the lack of enhanced skills is backtracked to the lack of academic qualification, financial pressure and overall lack of skill enhancing opportunities and the employment options thereof. As stated above, most of the youth/adolescent of the area follow in the steps of their earlier generation who are employed in trades such as hotel or catering, automotive repair or AC repairing. Although there are some IT educational institutes, there is no gainful employment resulting from completing the basic IT courses which demotivates them further. Coupled with this the existing gender norm clearly is unfavorable for the females which dictate that females have to take up household chores and therefore there is no use in enrolling them in skill building initiatives.

In the rural area severe hindrance for skill building initiatives were shared by the adolescent and male youth groups in terms of availability and accessibility of such programmes in the vicinity. Around 50 percent of youth indicated that there are no adequate vocational training institutes in their locality with only one computer training institute. The male youths are more interested in training in electronic goods (television, air condition, mobile) repairing as they perceive a huge demand in this sphere due to rapid urbanization and the invasion of technology even in rural area. But, by enlarge the main interest amongst the adolescent boys lies in mixed farming, art and crafts like handicrafts, bags, zari work, tailoring, sewing and poultry. Similar statement was shared by the females too. Although majority of the female youth indicated that they want to pursue nursing as a career as a formal training course but the problem of visiting to the nearby city to avail at their own cost was stated as an obstacle to take it further. The partner organization had involved the local SHGs to impart various skill development training and basics of enterprise development to the identified youths. They wanted to explore into a similar model as of SHG acting as an enterprise. But the existing SHGs are reluctant to involve females below 18 as they fear that after marriage the female youth will drop out. However, the final trade has not been selected and they are not sure what would be the outcome. The female youth indicated that there were some skill building programs initiated in the area which have faded away over the years.

While interacting with youth, adolescent and community members, several key parameters have been quantified to understand desire to undergo skill-based training, available training opportunities and the awareness on Government schemes pertaining to skill building. The table clearly depicts the responses in two scenarios of urban and rural context.

The prevailing lack of skill building avenues coupled with the inability of the females to pursue their interest therefore creates a vicious cycle of poverty and lack of empowerment avenues.

*“The criteria and model for the life skills training is largely same in rural and urban areas. However, one major difference is that skill training targeted at rural population is entrepreneurship oriented while in urban it is service oriented. Save the Children conducted a study that revealed rural youth have much better opportunities in business than job seeking.”*  
– Save the Children, Project Staff.

The disconnect with the professional sphere is evident primarily because of the lack of both life skills and professional skills of the youth of this area.

An effort was taken to assess the knowledge, attitude, perception and practice in the context of skill building amongst the adolescents and youths of

Categories	Rural (%)					Urban(%)				
	Adolescent Girls	Youth Girls	Adolescent Boys	Youth Boys	Community member	Adolescent Girls	Youth Girls	Adolescent Boys	Youth Boys	Community member
<b>Desire to undergo skill-based training</b>										
Getting employment is the primary reason for attaining such training	50	80	50	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Training Opportunities</b>										
Boys are more interested in catering, AC repairs, mechanic job	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	75
Girls are more into hospitality and beauty care	100	50	100	50	80	100	100	100	100	100
Adequate scope of training is not available in their areas	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	40
<b>Awareness on Government skill building scheme</b>										
Schemes are more available for boys	45	50	50	67	45	100	100	80	75	80
Schemes are available for girls	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Schemes are more availed by boys	100	100	60	70	50	100	100	80	70	75
Schemes are more availed by girls	100	100	100	100	100	50	55	100	100	90
<b>Total Number</b>	N=12	N=12	N=12	N=12	N=14	N=21	N=24	N=23	N=23	N=18

the coverage areas segregating into urban and rural areas.

## 2.4 Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) is one of the most critical aspects influencing the daily lives especially of adolescents and youth. However, due to societal norms, taboos, religious and cultural beliefs this is the most neglected aspect in the present context as being discussed later in the sub-section primarily being collated during the present study.

SRHR is also not viewed from an educational perspective which makes it harder for the young population to be aware of the physiological changes and associated rights. This problem is manifested more in economically backward communities where the elderly has limited or no education and therefore are not in a position to transmit knowledge to their children.

In the urban areas limited knowledge regarding the bodily changes was assessed from the female and male adolescent groups. Ignorance about the physiological changes that occur in the body during adolescence was expressed by the groups. Adolescent girls had no awareness about the physiological changes occurring in their bodies especially related to Menstrual Health (MH). The female youth mentioned that they are aware of the bodily changes that occur during the adolescent years. None of the female youth member of the FGDs indicated any awareness about the physiological changes especially among the women during the puberty. Knowledge about males was absolutely missing within the groups. All the respondents mentioned about menstruation only after experiencing their first cycle of periods. They have come to know about menstruation from their mothers or other elderly family members. They have also been told that it is "*bad blood that comes out of body*" and during this time of the month girls are "*discouraged to venture out of home*". This prevailing practice forces girls to be irregular in school during their menstruation. These females however encouragingly indicated that they either use sanitary pads or clean clothes during their periods and 50 percent of the adolescents also indicated that they have heard in schools that using clothes can cause bacterial infection. The female youth are aware of contraceptives and have heard this from their elders and seen in the advertisements on contraceptives featured in the TV. Only one married youth shared her knowledge and usage about contraceptives who is married with a four-year old daughter. Their knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS is limited. Substantial percent of the youth females have only heard about HIV/AIDS but are not aware how this disease is contracted or can be prevented.

The findings of the interaction with youth, adolescent and community members have been presented in the matrix below where by the key findings have been quantified on how much the youth and adolescent boys and girls are aware of their bodily changes or the common practice during the menstrual cycle, social norms associated with menstrual and reproductive health and how the responses differs in urban and rural setup.

During the Intergenerational Trios in the urban areas it was indicated by elderly females that they still prefer to use clothes over sanitary napkins. An interesting observation expressed by this group is that contraception is forbidden as per their religion and therefore the male members do not use any contraceptive. If there is a need it is the females who use any such method. Information about HIV/AIDS is also limited as they have heard about the disease but do not know all the details. The rural youth girls relatively more aware than urban.

*At the time of childbirth testing was done. This is a disease that can cause problem in mother or the child during pregnancy but not sure about the whole thing"*

- Youth female group, Rural

*'We do not know about it. Only heard of the name and we did not ask anybody'.*

- Youth female group Urban

Categories	Rural(%)					Urban(%)				
	Adolescent Girls	Youth Girls	Adolescent Boys	Youth Boys	Community member	Adolescent Girls	Youth Girls	Adolescent Boys	Youth Boys	Community member
<b>Bodily changes and SRHR</b>										
Aware about bodily changes while growing	50	100	50	100	60	50	100	50	100	70
Boys are more open to discuss issues on sex and sexuality	-	-	60	60	100	-	-	100	100	100
Awareness on SRHR issues is less amongst the girls	100	100	-	-	100			100	100	100
Family is the primary source of acquiring knowledge on SRHR	70	100	50	50	75	100	100	50	50	100
<b>Practice during menstrual cycle</b>										
Menstruation is a normal affair	50	100	-	-	-	100	100	-	-	-
Females are aware about the hygiene concerns related to menstrual health	100	100	-	-	-	100	100	-	-	-
Females avoid using sanitary pad for affordability issues	100	100	-	-	-	100	100	-	-	-
Females prefer to use sanitary napkins	60	100	-	-	-	100	100	-	-	-
<b>Knowledge level on STI and UTI</b>										
STI and UTI can happen to anybody	50	70	40	80	-	50	50	45	60	-
STI and UTI are curable	50	85	50	80	-	35	75	40	80	-
One cannot marry and have children if affected with UTI and STI	60	75	50	80	-	45	60	45	75	-
<b>About HIV/AIDS</b>										
HIV/AIDS can affect everybody	50	100	45	100	-	50	50	50	100	-
This is preventable and curable too	50	60	60	75	-	60	60	75	90	-
There is on information about it to us	100	100	100	100	-	100	100	100	100	-
<b>Knowledge and practice on contraception</b>										
Girls are ignorant about contraceptives before marriage	100	42	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Boys get the information from internet, senior friends, books	50	100	70	100	100	75	100	50	100	100
Girls have no means of information	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Male thinks females are solely responsible for FP	-	-	60	80	-	-	-	80	80	-
Male are more aware of the correct contraception methods than female	-	100	90	100		-	100	100	100	100
<b>Total Number</b>	N=12	N=12	N=12	N=12	N=14	N=21	N=24	N=23	N=23	N=18

Limited knowledge regarding bodily changes were marked in the male adolescent groups though youth had a better awareness. Boys from the groups had the knowledge about body changes of males. Their ignorance about any bodily or physiological changes of women was quite evident during the discussion. Among the adolescent males, none of them indicated any awareness about MH, contraceptives or HIV/AIDS. They have heard about the word without much details about the preventions and transmission. They all have heard of contraceptive methods and seek the opinion of their elders on such matters. Interestingly all the male youth indicated that internet is a source of information on all such information.

While the male group indicated internet as the source of information, for the females it was usually discussing these issues with the elder females in the family or even discussion between friends. There is a slight gender divide in terms of accessing knowledge.

In the urban areas, it is therefore observed that knowledge pertaining to SRHR is often limited, not discussed openly and transitioning of existing unsafe practices from one generation to the next. The cultural and societal norms also dictate that sexual health is still considered as taboo and the youth/adolescent are not encouraged to attain the accurate and appropriate information. Gender stereotyping and bias is more pronounced as it is expected that women have to take contraceptive methods and males are not willing to do so.

#### **Catalyzing change in gender norms : Promoting SRHR knowledge**

Mohammad Afzal Khan is the 40-year-old Imam of a local mosque in Kamarhati. He describes his neighbourhood community being comprised of immigrants from UP and Bihar who have been settled in Kamarhati for over 50 years or so. In the last 25 years, Khan has seen rapid advancement in literacy and adaptation of modern lifestyle in and around the area with all the residing communities. This is evident from the fact that earlier most girls were married off before fully completing high school and now every house has at least one graduate girl. In fact, the mosque itself champions the cause of girls' education and employment. They support girls in pursuing skill training in areas like sewing, computer operations and English language.

In terms of knowledge of SRHR matters, Imam Khan acknowledges that it is a very crucial topic for youth to be trained on formally. However, neither the government nor the mosque have any official course or class on this topic. He mentions that there are several religious books that give detailed scientific knowledge about coitus, menstruation and more. While women (mothers/elder sisters) often use these books to impart knowledge to girls, boys have less access to these resources. They are more likely to watch online videos and get their knowledge from friends and are often being misguided with incomplete or wrong information.

Even though religious texts place importance on imparting correct sexual education and knowledge, these topics are still a taboo in society and no effort is made to formally teach about SRHR to young people. The youths are often misled by social media channels too. Hence, it is very important to organise SRHR training for both girls and boys.

In the rural area 50 percent of the adolescent females indicated that they are aware of the physiological changes that occur during these years. While the female youth indicated that they are aware of physiological changes that take place during adolescence with no knowledge about male counterparts. They however also indicated that they were previously not aware of menstruation and only after experiencing their first periods the information was shared by their mothers. They have also been told that during menstruation it is "*bad blood*" which comes out and they should not touch any "*auspicious things*" in and around the house thus confirming the prevalence of social and cultural taboos associated with menstruation. These group of adolescents, mentioned that they use sanitary pads brought by the AHSA workers at subsidized rate for below 18 years. Around 58 percent of the female youth indicated that they have heard about contraception mostly from their elder sisters. Usage of contraceptives is primarily seen as the responsibility of the females as males are reluctant to use contraceptives. Gradually, females are using contraceptives more as they do not want large families being an additional responsibility in poor economic situation. A few of the females in the youth group also reported that they had urinary tract infection and had consulted doctors. But complete ignorance was found in the adolescent groups regarding the UTI. The knowledge about HIV/AIDS was missing in the

adolescent groups. The married women in the groups were found to be aware of HIV/AIDS as testing takes place during pregnancy being a uniqueness found in rural area. However, this is not discussed till that time and therefore there is a general lack of knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS in this area amongst all the groups.

#### **Progressive thinker until it comes to girls**

This father of two young boys- Mohd Alam is a tailor and runs his own tailoring shop. He studied up to 9<sup>th</sup> standard and started working in jute mill at the age of 18. Despite his limited education, he endorses an open mindset as evident from the fact that he encouraged his wife to learn tailoring and help him out at the shop. He even arranged for her to apply for Anganwadi work but unfortunately, she could not qualify through the selection process. Even in the case of his sons he is of the strong view that they should not discontinue education early and strive to complete graduation so that they can appear for government exams like WBCS and secure lucrative government jobs. When asked about his family planning views, he once again demonstrated progressive views by stating that even though Islam says childbirth shouldn't be prevented, he knew that in his limited income it would not be wise to have more than two kids.

However, despite his otherwise advanced thoughts when asked what type of future he would envision for his daughters - it was found with limited opinion on his version. He explicitly stated - *"girls should focus on learning household chores and studies. Girls should be married as soon as they attain the marriageable age of 19 or 20. They are not allowed to go to the call center job because we don't allow them to go out and do the duty outside. I feel that this is the age to study and so if I send them (boys) to work then they will not study anymore. Once studies are completed -they can get a good job only after graduation."*

He also expressed implicit support for the practice of giving dowry during girls' marriage as a means of security to her in-laws house.

Among the male adolescents, there was no significant knowledge in terms of bodily and physiological changes which was found to be higher in case of the youth. Youth of the group shared some misconception regarding the physiological changes and their awareness about sexual health and rights was found to be very limited. For both the groups it was found that males were quite open to discuss on sex and sexuality being uniquely found in the rural setting. Their knowledge about menstruation was very rudimentary. The males were of the opinion that girls could discuss this freely with their elders as they are the ones who experience menstruation. They are all aware of contraception and have acquired knowledge from digital mediums or talking to their friends or elderly males. They however did not indicate much knowledge about the HIV/AIDS.

The Intergenerational Trio conducted revealed information on same lines with females still using clothes during menstruation and no active use of contraception. Some of the male members however felt that it is important both the young male and females to be aware of these issues. Knowledge about HIV/AIDS is also limited.

A similar scenario to the urban areas therefore exists in the rural areas with SRHR still considered as taboo and youth/adolescent especially females do not have guidance systems in place. In some cases, the ASHA workers do provide some information, but the overall situation is severely skewed against the transmission of knowledge pertaining to SRHR especially among the females.

## **2.5 Gender Role and Social Norms: Agency and Decision Making**

The study has aimed to explore the underlying gender-based perception in education, skill building, employment and also to understand social and cultural practices and behaviours that are considered to barriers in the path of girls and boys successful transition to adulthood. In this context, the adolescent females from urban areas mentioned that boys have more freedom to choose and lead their life as they wish to which was more found in the Muslim dominated area. It was stated here that girls are not allowed to roam and socialize freely but in contrast adolescent females of the other location did not share such practices related to gender discrimination. Overall, it was found that boys are also given more freedom to decide what to study, where to go; whereas girls always have to follow the instructions of their elders. They clearly stated that boys are always

given more importance in their families. The same sentiment was echoed by all the adolescent and youth groups, because as boys they have more freedom and can assert their own decisions. This is primarily because they feel that boys are earning members and therefore should be allowed the freedom. In one of the urban areas, discrimination at the family level was also shared during the discussion. The discrimination was mainly found in terms of food, medication, education, clothing, rights etc. The adolescent group did not have the voice to share their opinion in front of male family members. The youth believed females are discouraged from working or going outside to pursue their career. In the male youth groups, around 50 percent of the youth encouragingly expressed that girls should have more freedom and should also be encouraged to seek employment to aid in the family income. They also agree that the males have more freedom and have greater decision-making power. Fifty percent of the female youth indicated that although girls do not have the choice to express their wishes, some of them have started to ascertain for their rights. They also agree that the males have higher degree of freedom and have more leeway in terms of decision making. The female youth also indicated that due to their responsibility of household work, girls do not get the opportunity to pursue their career or work for longer hours. If allowed -they cannot seek regular work as they have to first cater to household requirements.

Interactions during the Intergenerational Trio however revealed that the elderly does feel that girls should have more freedom. However, they also accept the prevailing gender-based discrimination such as gender violence

It was stated- *"This is the Gods will and we don't have anything in our hand. Boys are more powerful physically and mentally and they can take all the pressure and challenges being required to run the family. Woman has to listen and follow her father or husband"*.

This clearly states that gender discrimination is prevalent and also a widely-accepted fact.

In the rural context, the male and female adolescent mentioned about the better opportunities for girls in terms of education and employment. Males of the adolescent and youth group shared about the higher degree of personal freedom to boys is prevalent within the family as well as the community. They also encouragingly indicated that during decision making, the women of the

#### **Superwoman Amita: Breaking the stereotype of gender**

Amita is 37 years old. She was married at 17 and could only study till the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. As her family was poor and she had 10 siblings, she had to drop out of school early, work to earn and support her family. Her husband moved to Hyderabad soon after marriage and then to Gujarat working as construction labour. He would send only a meagre sum of money back home and would visit once in 6 months or less.

Since then, she had to look after her kids and herself. She worked in vegetable gardens, farms and betel leaf plants to earn enough for her kids. Her daughters' studies till 12<sup>th</sup> class but could not manage to send them to college because BA/MA needs further financial support. With her hard work and by meeting all ends, she managed to save Rs. 1.5 lakhs for her elder daughter's wedding. She even went against social conventions, her own beliefs to allow her younger daughter to get married of her choice. Her only brother took their father's property and left the village leaving the old parents alone. She took the role of a son and started looking after her parents by supporting them regularly in terms of physical support and financial help.

Anita added- *"Our mothers did not do hard work like we do now. Also, mother did not know the process how a family runs, the way we know now. I maintain my family with lot of hardship, my mother did not do all these. Even my daughter is blessed to have a comfortable life."* Write the verbatim in the language that was spoken in bracket. This is applicable for other verbatim used in the report as well. Overall, she is an example of changing gender norms where women take up both home duties and earning responsibility although her impetus to change was driven by necessity more than an inherent rebellion.

household are now being increasingly consulted. A similar sentiment is echoed by 60 percent of the males who indicated that there is greater scope of participation for women in education and employment. However, decision making is still considered to be the domain of males. The female youth expressed that although girls are being encouraged to study, they have to follow rules provided by the boys. They have to follow *curfew hours* in terms of returning home and have lesser

freedom in socializing. Parents are hesitant in allowing more freedom to girls as there were few unforeseen incidents in their locality. In order to represent the findings on gender-based discrimination, decision making ability and gender equality among the youth and adolescent, among the boys and girls, between the urban and rural set up, the following table has been prepared. It has given an overview of the responses aggregated against the total number of respondents interviewed.

## Gender Mapping

During the interaction with the adolescents and youth, Gender Mapping exercise was undertaken which highlights the key perceptions among the male and female related to some key gender notions. The following table outlines the responses of the surveyed adolescent and youth and provides an interesting snapshot about the perceived gender roles and social norms that influence their daily lives.

Statement - Total Level	Male			Female		
	Low (0-4)	Neutral (5-6)	High (7-10)	Low (0-4)	Neutral (5-6)	High (7-10)
<b>In home responsibilities</b>	38.20%	21.70%	40.00%	5.00%	15.60%	79.10%
<b>Responsibility for earning in family</b>	3.47%	9.56%	86.95%	50.43%	23.47%	26.08%
<b>More advantage in daily life</b>	16.52%	23.47%	60.00%	32.17%	26.95%	40.86%
<b>Taking part in decision making within the family</b>	16.52%	18.26%	65.21%	34.78%	27.82%	37.39%
<b>More advantages in outing</b>	9.56%	8.69%	81.73%	48.69%	27.82%	23.47%
<b>More choice in clothing as per own taste</b>	10.43%	14.78%	74.78%	33.04%	22.60%	44.34%
<b>More leisure time</b>	17.39%	20%	62.60%	39.13%	30.43%	30.43%
<b>More Education Exposure</b>	12.17%	20%	67.82%	26.08%	22.60%	51.30%
<b>More physical strength</b>	13.04%	13.04%	73.91%	32.17%	24.34%	43.47%
<b>More right to choose occupation</b>	6.95%	11.30%	81.73%	39.13%	26.08%	34.78%

In order to represent the findings on gender-based discrimination, decision making ability and gender equality among the youth and adolescent, among the boys and girls, between the urban and rural set up, the following table has been prepared. It has given an overview of the responses aggregated against the total number of respondents interviewed.

Categories	Rural (%)					Urban(%)				
	Adolescent Girls	Youth Girls	Adolescent Boys	Youth Boys	Community member	Adolescent Girls	Youth Girls	Adolescent Boys	Youth Boys	Community member
<b>Gender based discrimination</b>										
Discrimination starts and exists at home	100	100	50	50	50	100	100	50	50	75
Boys are responsible to earn for the family	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Boys have more advantage in daily life	100	100	100	100	70	100	100	100	100	80
Boys take part in decision making within the family	100	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	100	80
Girls have freedom for choice in clothing as per own taste	50	50	100	100	50	50	50	100	100	80
Boys have more leisure time	100	100	60	70	100	100	100	50	50	100
Boys have more exposure to education	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Freedom of boys to choose occupation	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Decision making ability</b>										
Boys have more power to take decision in different spheres of their lives	100	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	100	50
Girls need to seek permission for any outdoor activities	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Gender Equality</b>										
Girls are getting equal opportunities like boys in getting education	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Girls are getting equal opportunities for jobs, employment	100	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Total Number</b>	N=12	N=12	N=12	N=12	N=14	N=21	N=24	N=23	N=23	N=18

**In home responsibilities** – It can be clearly noted among all respondents that 79 percent of them indicated the highest score for women when it comes to in house responsibilities. This clearly indicates that females are still primarily tasked with household chores. This study has also revealed that even if the women are working, they are expected to take care of households' responsibilities. There is a uniform pattern across urban and rural areas in this regard.

**Responsibility for earning in family** – From the table the responsibility of earning being the domain of males is clearly established. Although the interactions during the study indicated that some women are taking up work gradually, the gender and social norms dictate that men have to earn, and women have to take care of the family. This is more skewed in the urban areas compared to the rural areas as in rural areas 76 percent of the respondents indicated moderate to high score for women in terms of earning responsibility.

**More advantage in daily life** – There is a mixed response with a slight skew in favour of males which are indicated by 60 percent of the respondents to have more advantage in daily life. However, close of 41 percent of the respondents also indicated that women also have advantage in daily life. The situation in rural areas is more encouraging for women primarily because in rural areas women still have some employment and educational opportunities.

**Taking part in decision making within the family** – Overall this is skewed in favour of males with 65.2 percent of the respondents indicating a higher score for males compared to women. However, as indicated in the above sections, women are gradually being accepted as important decision makers especially in the rural areas and among the youth population.

**More advantages in outing** – There is a clear bias in terms of males having advantage in terms of going out for education, training, employment as indicated by 81.7 percent of the respondents indicating a high score for men. This is primarily because women are still not allowed to venture on their own due to safety and security concerns.

**More choice in clothing as per own taste** – There is a moderate bias towards men having more freedom and choice in clothing as indicated 74.7 percent of the respondents. One of the key underlying factors is the religious beliefs which dictate attires especially among the women. Also, as women do not venture out too much from their own localities except on family or group outings, the choices are limited for women vis-à-vis men.

**More leisure time** – There is an interesting contradiction here as 62.6 percent of the respondents indicated that males have higher leisure time compared to women. This is primarily because men do not assist in household chores at all even if they are unemployed. This therefore allows men to have more leisure time compared to women. **The contradiction is therefore that men in spite of not being employed have higher leisure time thereby indicating more societal pressure for females.**

**More Education Exposure** – There is a moderate parity in terms of education exposure as 67.8 percent and 51.3 percent of the respondents indicated high score for male and female respectively. This corroborates the earlier findings that both boys and girls are getting equal educational opportunities presently.

**More physical strength** – 73.9 percent respondents indicated the high score for males in aspect of physical strength. Interestingly 43.4 percent of the respondents have indicated a high score for women **due to the higher workload especially in the rural areas.**

**More right to choose occupation** – There is a clear distinction where 81.7 percent respondents indicated a high score for males in terms of choosing occupation. This is primarily because men have greater freedom in scoping out different trades and also have the liberty of venturing out for employment.

## 2.6 Social Protection Schemes and Programmes

Specific social protection schemes and programmes have been launched by local and state government targeting on the primary respondents in terms of their education, skill building, vocational training and social security. The state government has planned to train six lakh youth in the current fiscal under "Utkarsh Bangla", an umbrella scheme for all skill development in the state. The local partner organization was found to have implemented life skill programmes too in the study areas.

While interacting with the primary target group that information penetration about the schemes is still limited. This is brought to the forefront during the course of this study as none of the adolescents in the urban areas have no knowledge of any such schemes. Fifty percent of the male youth indicated to have some knowledge about the schemes for minorities. They however did not indicate any knowledge about the vocational training schemes or opportunities that may exist for the youth. Interaction with local community members also supported the 'no penetration' on knowledge regarding any such schemes.

Contrary to the above, awareness about social protection schemes is more prevalent in the rural area where by 64 percent of male youth, 43 percent adolescent males, 80 percent female youth and 58 percent adolescent females are aware about some of the schemes and programmes. However, one of the key factors brought to the list of findings is that both the male groups mentioned that they are always late to receive information from the local panchayats. The male respondents were of the opinion that females are benefitted of such schemes. One of the female youth groups indicated that they have undergone three-day training by the local CSO and now feel encouraged to start doing their own work which they feel can help in their family income. The youth boys are interested to explore all avenues of training and are also interested to travel outstation if it demands to avail any vocational training. The local community area highlighted the lack of facilities in terms of technical institutions to impart the skill development training to the rural youths. The existing institutions are distantly located from the village and youth are unable to avail the services owing to distance and expenses incurred while attending the curriculum.

The lack of knowledge of government run entrepreneurial schemes is also not available to any of the youth groups or the elderly members interacted with during the survey.

Interactions during the trios reveal that females are aware of schemes as such "Kanyashree". Support from the government schemes for toilet construction (Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan), Indira Awas Yojana, MGNREGA, Swami Vivekananda Karma Sangstha Prokalpo, and Karma Sathi were also mentioned during interactions with local stakeholders.

*The panchayat member shared his information about the existing schemes. He stated- 'we as an agency cannot afford to reach to the entire village. We need some partner to take it ahead. Even the youth can be instrumental to facilitate the initiative at the local level.'*

The local NGO is keen to take the partnership ahead but with the limitation of fund , it becomes a challenge in terms of mobilization and reaching to the wider mass.

## Chapter 3: Recommendations and Way Forward

### 3.1 Conclusion

The overall findings of the KAP study have been discussed in the previous chapter detailing out into different sub-sections. Based on the findings, the following inference can be drawn from each of the key areas which are aligned with the objectives of the KAP study. Under each of the key areas, the analysis of findings has been summed up and also gender norms and factors influencing the education, employment, skill building of youth especially girls have been factored in.

#### Education

In the education section it has been observed that the desire to attain higher education is clearly evident across both adolescent and youth of both urban and rural areas. Although educational avenues are widespread especially in the urban areas, the constraints on pursuing higher education is related to financial weakness whereas in the rural areas along with the constraints of financial weakness, the lack of educational institutions forces the adolescent and youth of the area to drop out and seek employment. An interesting aspect arises from the urban localities where the male adolescent and youth believe that females in the community are discouraged from pursuing higher education as they believe that women are more suited for household chores. Also in the rural area, a similar sentiment is echoed where it is stated that although equal education opportunities exist, youth especially females are discouraged from pursuing higher education due to the lack of any gainful employment opportunities.

Although there have been clear changes in the attitude of the adolescent and youth of both the urban and rural areas the following key considerations should be factored in while developing the intervention strategy.

- The desire to attain higher education is evident across both adolescent and youth of both urban and rural areas.
- Despite educational avenues being widespread in the urban areas, the constraints are related to financial weakness which forces them to veer towards seeking employment mainly in the informal sector.
- In the rural areas, along with the constraints of financial weakness, the lack of educational institutions forces the adolescent and youth of the area to divert towards seeking employment.
- The parents of these adolescent and youth are still not convinced about the importance of education and firmly believe that they should start contributing towards family income due to the prevailing poor economic condition

#### Employment

The study revealed a gap between the primary stakeholders and the elders of the community in the urban areas. Male youth and adolescent think that females now have equal employment opportunities and they have no issues with the females seeking employment. They also realize the cultural practices and family pressure will not allow most of the women to pursue gainful employment opportunities. On the contrary, most of the females interacted with revealed that they are eager to get employed as they realize that this will not only lead to financial gain but also allow them to have greater voice and independence which they do not have presently.

Some of the important aspects to consider are as follows:

- There is a clear desire among both males as well as females of urban areas to start working but are inhibited due to the lack of employment opportunities and societal pressure limiting the females from seeking employment.
- In the rural areas, both males and females are engaged in income generating activities, but these are in the informal and unorganized sector.

- There is a clear attitudinal chasm between the elderly, the present adolescent and youth related to employment opportunities and involvement of females.
- Disparity among the pay between male and females for the same work was strikingly shared and observed in rural and urban locations.
- There is clear recognition among the youth that females should also take up employment as this contributes towards family income, predominantly found in urban areas and in rural counterpart as well.
- In the Muslim dominated urban area, there is still some inhibition among the elderly due to prevailing societal customs and beliefs that females should not take up any form of employment. However, the expectation is also that along with their job, females should take care of the household chores which was shared in one of the urban areas.
- Limited education, lack of employment opportunities and skill sets act as severe hindering factors for the local youths of the area in involving themselves in entrepreneurship
- Lack of financial capital limits their scope of starting their own ventures. With the prevailing economic condition, this has further dented the prospects.

## Skill Development and Training

The skill building programs varied in urban and rural locations based on the need, interest areas and based on the demand of the trait. The adolescents and youths from the surveyed areas are clearly disadvantaged in terms of both life skills and professional skills which can aid in transitioning to gainful employment. Trades being taken up mostly by males in the urban areas are limited to the informal sector while in the rural areas it is limited to agriculture or farm-based activities along with daily wage labourer. Females were found to have undertaken beautician course which however has not translated to employment. There is also a prevailing perception that there are no government schemes towards skill building of the youth which indicates lack of information amongst the community. The prevailing lack of skill building avenues coupled with the inability of the females to pursue their interest therefore creates a vicious cycle of poverty and lack of empowerment avenues.

The issues brought forward during the interactions centered around skill building reveal the following.

- There are skill building opportunities available in the urban areas, but the target group (adolescent and youth) are not properly oriented about the same.
- Unrealistic expectations in terms of short working hours and high salary often acts as deterrent to the youth of the area especially males to engage in any skill development training or job.
- Societal pressure is a hindrance for the females to explore skill building initiatives and despite their interest they may not be able to enroll themselves in such programs.
- In the rural areas, there are not too many options for skill building and more importantly some skill building programs started in the area have not been able to provide gainful employment to the targeted beneficiaries.
- There is lack of planned skill building programs which focus on the training but do not provide counseling support to the trainees for taking forward their enhanced skill sets.
- Due to the ongoing Covid-19 induced crisis and Amphan cyclone many have lost their jobs, and this has not only demotivated the youth of the area but also diminished the scope of the youth in securing jobs after completing skill building courses.

## SRHR

There was no significant knowledge in terms of bodily and physiological changes which was found to be higher in case of the youth than the adolescent males. Youth of the group shared some misconception regarding the physiological changes and their awareness about sexual health and rights was found to be very limited. Males were quite open to discuss on sex and sexuality being uniquely found in the rural setting though knowledge about menstruation was very rudimentary. Awareness on contraception was high though did not indicate much knowledge about the HIV/AIDS. Taboo was noticed for SRHR as an issue amongst the youth/adolescent especially females with lack of proper platform to get a guidance on it. In some cases,

the ASHA workers do provide some information, but the overall situation is severely skewed against the transmission of knowledge pertaining to SRHR especially among the females.

The analysis reveals the following regarding the KAP related to SRHR:

- Knowledge about physiological changes is limited and it is a challenge for the adolescent and youth of both urban and rural areas to gain some knowledge as no one is ready to discuss these issues openly. The groups were found to be curious to have the correct information around it.
- High prevalence of societal beliefs and taboos which foster the unhealthy and unethical practices of categorizing menstruation as “bad/impure”.
- Due to the limited avenues for gathering such knowledge adolescent are not prepared for the physiological changes that take place during puberty
- Clear dichotomy in terms of sexual rights with the burden of family planning solely resting on the females. Males are not even ready to adopt some safe and healthy practices as they firmly believe it is the duty of the females.
- Awareness on STI was totally lacking in the studied areas with limited knowledge on UTI, HIV/AIDS.

## Gender

It is therefore evident that some gender norms, social and cultural beliefs and taboos still dictate the life of the adolescent and youth of the area. The following may be inferred from the above.

- Although there have been improvements in terms of educational opportunities, men have greater freedom in life choices and have more say in decision making.
- Boys are still encouraged to pursue education and seek employment.
- Girls have to seek permission for venturing out of home or for any work that they choose to undertake.
- Girls in urban areas are more constrained due to safety and security reasons.
- Gender based violence is still predominant and is often perceived as an act of “*God’s fate*”.
- Income earning is perceived as the domain of men while women are supposed to take care of household chores. Even in instances where women work, they are supposed to take care of the household activities and children.

## Schemes and Programmes

The information penetration about the schemes is still limited more found in the urban areas. Youth indicated to have some knowledge about the schemes for minorities. They however did not indicate any knowledge about the vocational training schemes or opportunities that may exist for the youth. On the contrary, awareness about social protection schemes is more prevalent in the rural area. No gender perspective was noticed in terms of the government schemes and programmes across rural and urban areas.

The following may be inferred about the existence and implementation of social protection schemes and the knowledge of the people from the surveyed areas.

- Lack of full awareness about the different central government or state government run schemes and their target groups.
- Lack of proper communication amongst the communities about details of each scheme and how it can be availed by the target groups.
- More awareness in rural areas about social security schemes than that in urban areas.
- Schemes especially the ones targeted towards providing vocational training and entrepreneurial scope lack the connect between training delivery and transitioning to an employment opportunity whereby scheme beneficiaries can get employment or initiate their enterprise.

## 3.2 Recommendations

Concise and comprehensive recommendations are suggested to formulate the strategies leading to improved KAP of the target group and design an integrated intervention for the target group. The key points mentioned below will create a basis for developing a programme communication strategy to enhance child sensitivity to be used to improve the interventions and contribute to effective transition into adulthood and achieving the aspirations of the project.

- As part of community intervention program, it is recommended to sensitize both men and women on shared division of labour and changing gender roles in society. Sensitisation for men is important as men need to view women as equal partners in providing for and taking care of the household and family.
- The parents of adolescents should be sensitized on the act of child marriage and child labour law and encouraged to continue the education of their children.
- Counselling with family members specially the male members (father, husband, elder brother etc.) of the families should be initiated in parallel with resource mobilization stage. The process will help family members come out of age-old concept of girls/women being confined at home and engaged in household chores only. This will help female youth to enroll in skill building program freely.
- Setting up of 'legal centres' along with the PNGO can act as a motivator to parents too apart from the youths and adolescent. The program can address issues of sexual harassment, laws and legislation around sexual harassment to counter such issues. Strengthening the rights of the girl child to be integrated with legal counselling to be inbuilt into the program.
- Ensure the skill training addresses few sessions on how to handle harassment at workplace or raise voice against any gender-based violence or discrimination. This will ensure their training on coping mechanism as well as low attrition in workplace.
- While training the adolescents on SRHR module, it is important to outline the correct way of knowledge dissemination for this group of adolescents to peer group or younger kids. Otherwise this may have some adverse effect on community.
- SRHR module will not be limited to providing knowledge about the contraception methods, menstrual and sexual health, STI, UTI but also focus on the sexual orientation of adolescent boy and girl. There are many adolescents who cannot share their orientation with others when it is not straight. This creates a huge mental health issue leading to fatal consequences.
- It is recommended to sensitize the male members of the family on the contraception methods as it is important for men to understand that family planning is not the sole responsibility of the female and it is necessary to adopt some safe and healthy alternatives for family planning. This will lessen the burden on young girls from early childbirth and provide some time for themselves to be engaged in constructive work. Moreover, it will improve the maternal health too.
- Program should counsel female youth to come out of the gender stereotype and join the skill building training for the trade or stream that are not so conventional for girls. This will widen the job market. Program should address some added methods of self-defense as part of life skill training so that the restrictions in movement for safety issues are diminished and gender based violence are stopped.

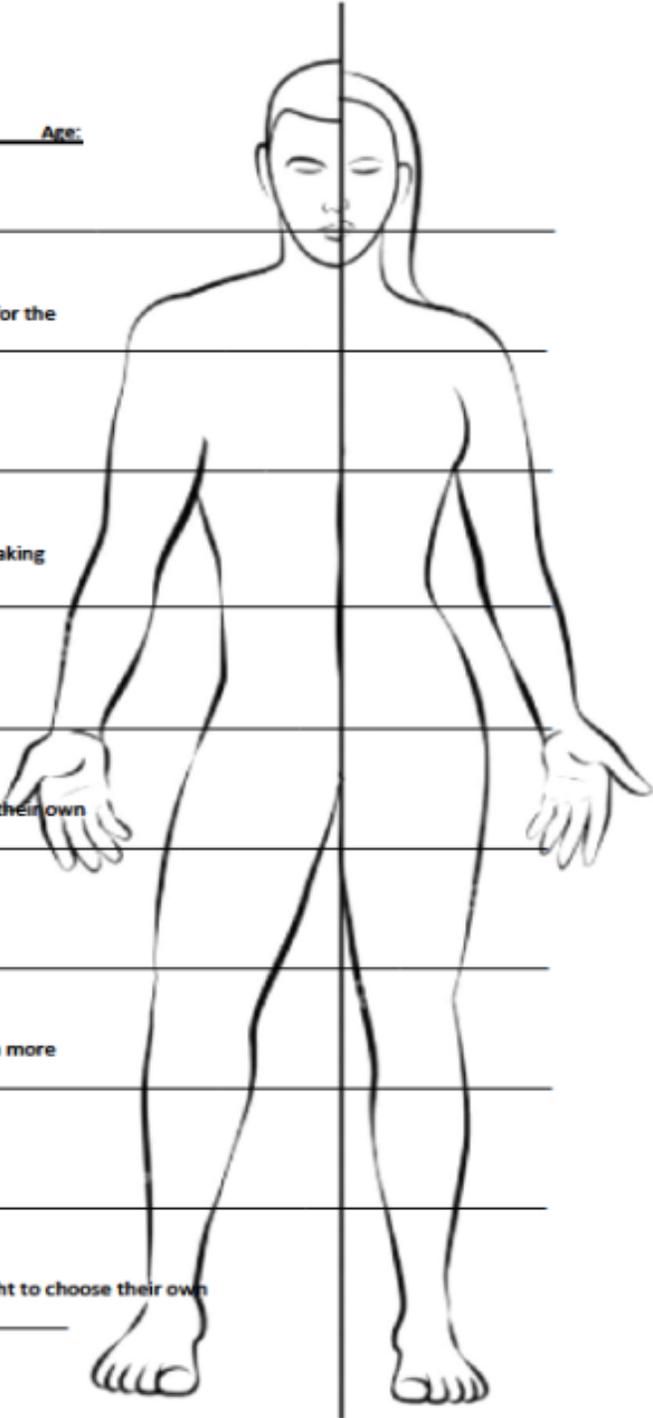
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## Annexure 1: Gender Mapping

### Understanding Gender roles

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_



- Who take responsibilities inside home for boys and girls? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who take responsibilities in earning for the family? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who get more advantages in daily life? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who can take part in the decision making Within the family? \_\_\_\_\_
- In terms of outing, who gets more advantage? \_\_\_\_\_
- In terms of clothing who can choose their own taste? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who enjoy more leisure timing? \_\_\_\_\_
- In terms of education who gets much more exposure? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who have more physical strength? \_\_\_\_\_
- In case of occupation, who has the right to choose their own choice? \_\_\_\_\_

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