

5. Special Programmes

Adolescence Education Programme

5.1.1 Backdrop

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) started working on Population and Development Education Project (PDEP) from January 1999 with funding from the Union Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD). The PDEP, one of the important programmes of the Tenth five Year Plan, has now evolved into the Adolescence Education Programme. It aims at effective integration of population and development as well as reproductive and sexual health concerns in the content and processes of school education and teacher education. The aim of this MHRD-UNFPA programme is to increase students awareness about these concerns and develop among them positive attitude and necessary skills enabling them to take informed decisions.

5.1.2 The Goals

NIOS has launched the Adolescents Reproductive and Sexual Health Education Programme (ARSH) under the Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) with the aim of providing adolescent learners necessary skills that will assist them in informed decision-making.

The goal of AE programme is to:

- ◆ create awareness of reproductive and sexual health related concerns of the adolescent learners,
- ◆ forewarn the learners about the problems that they are likely to face in everyday life,
- ◆ strengthen their life skills which will help them make informed decisions, and
- ◆ develop a positive attitude regarding these issues amongst learners.

5.1.3 Vision of AEP

Empowerment of adolescents through education and life skill development to make informed choices, keep off infections like HIV/AIDS, and adopt a responsible behaviour leading to a healthy learning society.

5.1.4 Programmes and Activities

The key issues to be addressed under AEP have been identified. These issues formed the basis of criteria for analyzing the study materials and identifying gaps.

5.1.5 Key Issues for Adolescence Education

- ◆ Process of Growing up
 - Understanding dimensions of health: Concept of physical, mental and social health
 - Eating wisely: Nutrition
 - Adopting hygienic practices: Personal Hygiene
- ◆ Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health
 - Postponing early marriage and pregnancy: Teenage pregnancy
 - Having children by choice, not chance: Abstinence, Contraception and Conception
 - Adopting safe, informed sexual behavior: Sexuality
 - Avoiding maternal morbidity and mortality: Safe motherhood
 - Addressing sexual harassment and violence
- ◆ RTI, STD, HIV/AIDS
 - Prevention and treatment of Reproductive Tract Infections and Sexually Transmitted Infections
 - Prevention of HIV/AIDS
- ◆ Substance Abuse
 - Practicing refusal skills for Substance Abuse.

5.1.6 Strategies of Integration

NIOS has decided to make educational interventions through curriculum for effective integration of Adolescence Education issues for the out-of-school youth. These interventions have been proposed in the curriculum and the study materials. The material will be developed keeping the Life Skills approach in view. To create an enabling environment, development of advocacy material has also been proposed.

A three-pronged implementation strategy has been proposed to meet the requirements of both the existing open school education system and the ARSH needs. These are through :

- Curricular intervention
- Life Skills development
- Advocacy

5.1.7 Curricular Intervention

There are three main ways to implement skill-based health education within schools.

- **Separate Subject** – as a specific subject to address one issue or, more commonly, a range of inter-related health and social issues
- **Single “Carrier” Subject** – placed within an existing subject, which is relevant to the issues, such as civic education, science, social studies, or Home Science.
- **Infusion or integration across many subjects** – included in all or many existing subjects through regular classroom teachers.

Life skills are best taught as a discrete module in the context of other issues considered relevant or related in the lives of children and young people. NIOS offers a basket of twenty-six courses at secondary level and twenty-five courses at senior secondary level. A learner may choose any five subjects with only one language compulsory. Keeping this unique feature of open schooling in view, NIOS has proposed infusion or integration across many subjects to achieve effective placement of AE issues within curriculum. It has been proposed to use other modes of distance education like audio, video, CDs, interactive voice response system (IVRS) and internet/ website for effective dissemination of ARSH related information.

5.1.8 Life Skills Development

WHO has defined Life Skills as the ability for adaptive and positive behaviour that enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

NIOS recognizes that Life Skills development leads to empowerment. It is proposed to focus on the development of the following life Skills.

- Communication Skills
- Thinking Skills
- Negotiation Skills

5.1.9 Advocacy

Organizing advocacy programmes to create an enabling environment is a very important aspect for successful implementation of this adolescent education programme. It is the endeavour of NIOS to involve all the stakeholders while addressing the adolescents' reproductive and sexual health concerns.

5.1.10 Work done during 2005-06

The Syllabi, curricula and study materials of the National Institute of Open Schooling were content analyzed for identifying gaps and developing strategies for effective integration of adolescence education (AE) elements in them.

- Workshops were organized in the subjects of Life Sciences, Home Science, Hindi and English to identify the gap areas.
- Advocacy material- Folders and Bookmarks were published in Hindi and English to sensitize the stakeholders and to create an enabling environment
- HIV/AIDS related content was developed and the information on ARSH issues was uploaded on the NIOS website.
- Audio programmes on ARSH issues were developed. The programmes were produced and broadcast through FM Gyanvani.

5.1.11 Agenda for 2006-07

- AE elements to be integrated in syllabi and study materials of secondary and senior secondary stages of open school education in a phased manner.

- Installation of IVRS for open schooling learners.
- Development and production of audio/ video support material.
- ARSH related information to be posted on NIOS website.

5.2 Education of the Disadvantaged

In the area of education of differently abled children, initiatives have been taken in the following areas :

- (i) Self-Instructional study material
- (ii) Fees
- (iii) Capacity building
- (iv) Inclusive Education

Self-Instructional Study Materials

It is a priority to develop a relevant, need-based and user friendly curriculum that will not only make education more accessible to learners with disabilities but also serve to retain them in the learning process and achieve educational goals. Towards this, the following have been done :

- * A panel of experts in each disability has been constituted to advise and recommend adaptations in self-learning materials.
- * Learning material for ten subjects at the secondary level have been printed in Braille.
- * A Vocational Education Course on 'Ear Mould Technology' is under development for the learning impaired learners.

Fees

NIOS does not charge tuition fee from the disabled learners upto the senior secondary level. This has been done to encourage greater participation of persons with disabilities, especially those belonging to the economically weaker sections and those from the semi-urban/rural areas. This is also in consonance with the PWD Act 1995, Chapter-IV, Section 26(I), "all persons with any or more disabilities shall have the right to have access to free education in an appropriate environment till the age of 21 years or completion of senior secondary education, whichever is earlier". Accordingly, only a nominal fee is charged for supply of study materials, audio/video cassettes and for student support services.

Capacity building

There is an imperative need to train personnel working with people with disabilities. The basic ground work has been done for organizing training sessions for teachers through tele conference/edusat, in collaboration with IGNOU. This will be a cost effective means of covering a large number of teachers within a short span of time.

Inclusive education

In consonance with National Policy on Education of the Disabled, a National level conference is being planned to be held next year. The objective is to draw up guidelines, in consultation with persons already engaged in disability education, for creating an inclusive environment for the disabled learners at all study centres across the country.