

The TAG Survey - 2018

The Teen Age Girls Survey 2018

Why did we do this survey?

With a tenth of the global population of adolescent girls, India is home to the largest and youngest workforce in the world today. Having reached this pivotal demographic point in our economic and political history, and in light of our long engagement with girls, we see investment in our girls, their health and well-being, their education and skilling, their productivity, economic potential and leadership as a national priority that can no longer be side lined. This resonates with findings of UN agencies and other leading development organizations that show the many ways in which investment in health, education and livelihood for girls and women create powerful ripple effect benefitting the entire society¹. Studies have estimated that ensuring 10 percent increase in girls going to school can increase the national income (GDP) by three percentage points². Every extra year a girl spends in school increases her income by no less than 10 to 20 percent; the return on secondary education is even higher and goes up 15 to 25 percent³. Since women reinvest 90 percent of their income in their families as opposed to men who plough back less than half this amount⁴, increase in incomes of women has proven intergenerational benefits that lift entire families and communities out of the vicious trap of poverty.

According to the latest National Family Health Survey (conducted in 2015-16), 53 percent of 15-49-year-old women are anaemic and 27 percent women in 20-24 years age group were married before 18. Our frequent interactions with Nanhi Kalis and Nanhi Kali alumni⁵ have well acquainted us with the many challenges that determine the life and possibilities of our girls once they complete school or dropout midway. In the absence of the care and support structure provided by Project Nanhi Kali, our undernourished and anaemic girls raised in poverty with patriarchal values fall easy prey to pressures from their families and communities. To reduce the financial burden of their natal families they either nod a quiet 'yes' to early marriage⁶ and leave the parental house or they join the low-paying and exploitative informal labour force to add to the family income while still young⁷.

It was evident that if we were to ensure that our girls led an independent and dignified life and contributed to the nation's growth, we had to take Project Nanhi Kali to a new level - a Nanhi Kali version 2.0 that would go beyond schooling and extend support to all girls till they turned 19 and equip them with a quiver full of skills - spoken English, digital literacy, financial literacy, body awareness, awareness and means to have good health and nutrition, self-defence, communication and negotiation skills and other skills so they can break free from the limited choices that poverty and patriarchy offer them, live up to their fullest potential and grow up to be informed confident women who can stand up for themselves. However, as we began designing the new version of Project Nanhi Kali and detailing out its various components, we realized that there was **no large scale database in our country on various aspects of lives of teenage girls** that we could refer to. Since teenage girls were not the concern, they also did not probe some of our major concerns like educational aspirations of girls, factors that hindered educational pursuit of girls, major concerns of our girls, skilling interests of girls, career and marital aspirations of girls and their agency⁸ in the important decisions of their lives. Thus apart from anecdotal insights of our Nanhi Kali alumni and a few qualitative studies done in select locations in the country, there was hardly a way to know - 'what it meant to be a teenage girl in India?'

¹ <http://www.womendeliver.org/knowledge-center/facts-figures/invest-in-women-it-pays/>

² <http://becauseiamagirl.ca/girlseducation>

³ http://www.clintonglobalinitiative.org/ourmeetings/PDF/actionareas/Why_Invest_in_Adolescent_Girls.pdf

⁴ <http://www.womendeliver.org/knowledge-center/facts-figures/invest-in-women-it-pays/>

⁵ those who have completed Class 10 and 'graduated' out of the Project Nanhi Kali

⁶ Before turning 18

⁷ Before turning 18

⁸ Agency is a sociological term, which refers to a person's capacity to act independently and make free choices. Agency of a person can be limited by the person's gender, economic status, caste, religion and such other factors. Education, exposure and skilling play an important role in determining a person's agency.

In a country of 120 million 10-19-year-old girls, the absence of reliable, representative body of evidence on teenage girls and their lives seemed to us be a critical data gap. In its absence, either we saw the way our policies and programmes had largely assumed that an adolescent girl is a helpless and vulnerable victim, whose prime need is protection from sexual aggression; or is a prospective mother who needs to be nourished well and vaccinated on time so that she can give birth to healthy babies.

Our policies and programmes had stayed blind to the various activities and experiences that make the life of a teenage girl, her aspirations and her challenges and the numerous ways in which she negotiates agency in a world that is dominated by men and gender and sex-based discriminations.

This realization spurred us at Naandi to engage in a direct conversation with girls across the country's length and breadth through a large-scale survey. The data so gathered would help us understand our teenage girls better and strategize our interventions through Nanhi Kali version 2.0. It would also be used to spearhead a high decibel evidence-based national advocacy to bring the full person of a teenage girl before the nation's imagination, compelling a change in status and societal perception of girls as weak, as dependents and as liabilities, and position the girl as an untapped potential, a promising asset with proven high returns on investment. We called it the Teen Age Girls Survey, TAG Survey for short.

Where did we do this survey?

The TAG Survey sample covers all 30 states and six major cities of India. These six cities are - Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai. It will able to provide national, state and six major city level estimates of all the indicators separately for the rural and urban areas and for each of the sub-group by major religion and wealth quintile.

The sampling (sampling design and sample size) procedure for TAG Survey takes into account several different estimates, in light of the fact that the survey objective is to capture different aspects of teenage girls' lives; ranging from estimation of the prevalence of anaemia, thinness, school dropout and educational aspiration to the experience of physical and sexual abuse among girls in the 13-19 years age group in each of the 30 states (including Delhi).

What

The survey questionnaire digitised on an android-based platform and installed on a 7-inch touch screen tablet with 1 GB Ram and 8 GB internal memory and 8 hours battery backup. This digital survey form have been designed in such a way that all questions skip pattern, complex logic, range validation, consistency etc. were taken care and utmost ease provide to surveyor even those who has basic digital literacy.

How

Before survey interviews begin in a PSU (Primary Sampling Unit), all the structures and houses of the place are listed. This process is called house-listing. In this exercise, the surveyors inform all the households about the survey and collect basic details about each household, including whether there is teenage girl. Based on these details an appropriate sample for the survey is obtained. Then a shortlist is created, of only those households that have a teenage girl. The random sample is then drawn from this shortlist.



Based on the house-listing, a list of randomly selected households is given to each survey team, each of which has two members.



To survey a household, each survey team needs to first meet the head of household, introduce themselves, the purpose and processes of the survey and request consent for the survey. Informed consent of the head of the household and the respondent is a must to conduct a survey as per internationally laid ethical guidelines of conducting research. If the respondent is below 18 years then we also need the consent of one of the girl's parent or her guardian.



After getting consent from head/guardian of household, we interview with index girls that usually take time between 20 to 30 minutes followed by measurement of height and weight and then conduct the Haemoglobin test as per laid ethical guidance and also obtain separate consent for Haemoglobin test from Head/guardian of household of index girl prior to test. And, at the end of these exercise we do provide result to height, weight and Haemoglobin test result. In case, we suggest/refer to local health personal if any index girls' haemoglobin count found abnormally low.