MALALA FUND

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Malala mentorship model in action

"Girls can run just as fast as boys"

Understanding the lives of adolescent girls and boys in Bihar

Summary of the Baseline Report
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Report Credit

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1 Introduction

In India, many adolescents, especially girls, have significant difficulties in terms of access to quality education, health care services and safe transportation. Despite the interventions made by governmental and non-governmental agencies, prospects for social and economic mobility as well as self-determination of adolescents remain dim. Part of the reason is that adolescents are rarely seen as independent, thinking and engaged citizens-in-the-making. To remedy this, we are developing an empowerment-based mentoring model that can be integrated into regular public-school curricula and pedagogical approaches at the secondary level for adolescents.

Funded and supported by the Malala Fund, the project titled *Empowerment-based Mentoring Model for Adolescent Girls: Action Research in Bihar,* is in the process of creating a mentoring model that can hone the leadership skills of adolescent girls and boys and provide them with tools and resources to develop critical thinking skills. We are currently working with 700 adolescent children between the ages of 11 and 14 studying in classes six and seven in ten schools in Muzaffarpur and Patna in Bihar. We are also attempting to work with out-of-school children living in the communities where the schools are located.

In order to develop a responsive and scalable mentoring model, we need to understand the lived experiences of children: how do adolescents spend their time, what are the kind of play activities in which they engage, who are their friends, what kind of work do they do and what they think about the world and themselves. We want to ensure that the mentoring model that we develop enables adolescents to examine, analyse and potentially change their perceptions and knowledge of themselves and their aspirations. Therefore, we conducted a baseline survey of all the students from classes six and seven in all the selected schools in Muzaffarpur and Patna.

Typically, a baseline survey is undertaken to form the basis for measuring the impact of any intervention through an eventual endline survey. But we already know that that localisation and prioritisation of the articulated needs and responses of the communities is essential as expectations and values that are imported from another context cannot function in the ones that are applied. Therefore, our mentoring model is being developed in response to the nature and characteristics of the local context and the baseline is used as the starting point to understand the lives of the adolescents to ensure that the mentoring model is in tune with their socio-cultural and economic contexts. With the information obtained from the baseline survey that will feed directly into our mentoring model, we will be able to enhance the opportunities and capabilities of adolescents, especially girls, to take action and to be a visible, vocal and critical part of their own lives and those of their families and communities.

2 The Mentoring Model

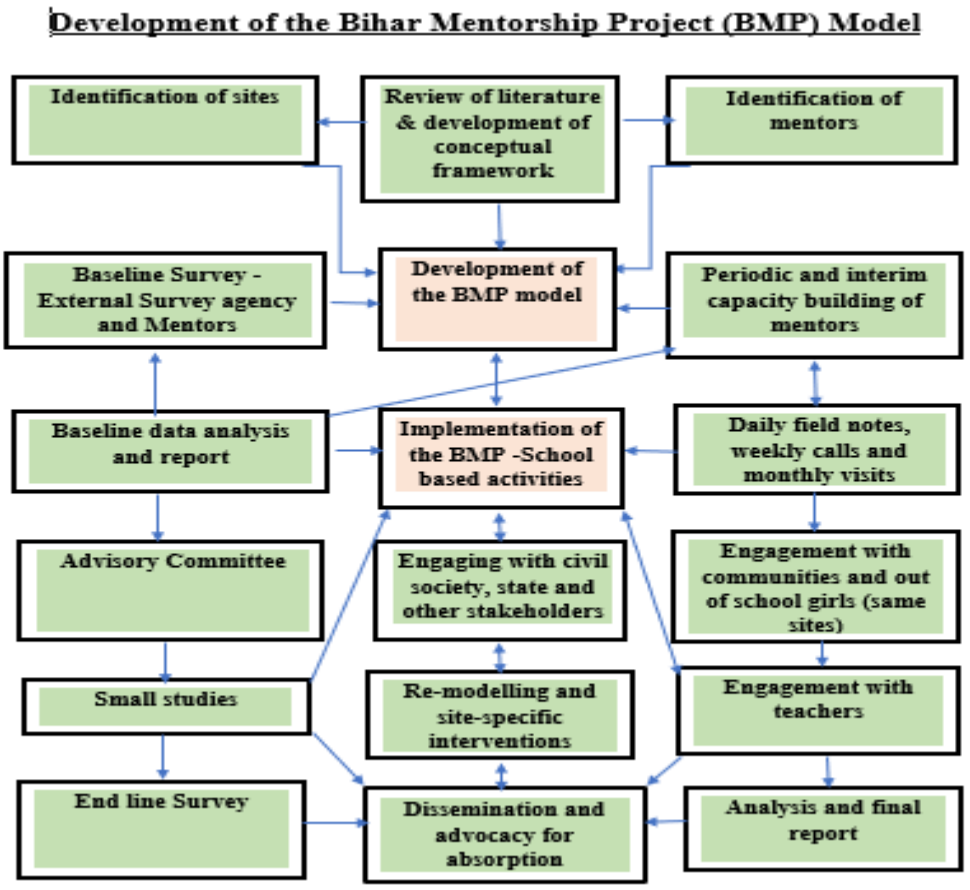
Education is an important vehicle of empowerment and certain forms of pedagogy have long been established as a way towards gaining empowerment (Kabeer, 2005). By learning from the experiences of empowerment-based education initiatives such as the ones practiced within Mahila Samakhya (MS), the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) model, the social learning approaches and other models implemented around the world, we are developing a new form of pedagogy in the framework of a mentoring model that prioritises critical thinking and civic engagement skills for girls and boys. Our goal for the project as a whole is to ensure that we are able (1) to plan, develop and undertake an ***action research*** project that focuses on mentoring adolescent girls (2) to consolidate the action research project into ***a scalable and sustainable model*** and (3) to develop and engage with a ***policy advocacy*** plan that can help the mentoring model to be integrated into secondary school curricular and pedagogical approaches.

This will enable adolescents to change their self-images, self-perceptions and confidence levels and help them question social norms, narratives and institutions that inhibit their lives. We also anticipate that this will help in changing the nature of their participation within their families, with their schools, with their friends but, most importantly, help in self-realisation and in honing their capabilities towards attaining self-identified goals and aspirations. Because the mentoring model also has to engage with families, schools and communities, the interaction will give rise to more discourse and action around the needs and requirements of adolescents, especially adolescent girls, in the community.

On a broader level, we believe that the presence of a responsive and evolving model will help in establishing a framework for scaling and will provide blueprints to integrate the approach into the current school curricula. By ensuring that the Bihar Mentoring Model (hereafter BMP) is organically evolving in response to ground realities and socialbarriers present in the field, we will be able to consolidate and concretise our ideas on education and empowerment processes and develop a pedagogical approach that can truly empower adolescents.

The first step in this process of change was to identify the target population of our mentoring model. After an extensive review of the literature as well as in-depth discussions with education experts and senior education administrators in Bihar and our analysis of school-wise secondary data, we identified six schools in each of the two districts - Muzaffarpur and Patna - and decided to work with girls and boys from the age group of 11 to 14 (from classes six to eight) in schools as well as out-of-school girls in the same vicinity. Then, we selected two mentors based on their knowledge and experience related to gender, education, and empowerment. We took care to ensure that the mentors were from the same socio-economic and cultural contexts as the students.

Figure 1: The BMP process diagram



Simultaneously, we developed the first iteration of the activities for the BMP based on our understanding of the extensive literature review that we conducted as well as the trends that we found in the early analysis of data from the baseline survey. This first iteration of the BMP was primarily focused on building a relationship with the adolescents and helping them with communication and articulation skills, incorporating a few foundational self-reflection exercises as well. The mentors were then trained on this mentoring model and a system was set up in the schools so that mentors interact with the students in classes 6 and 7 once a week for about three hours in each school.

During the process of implementation, the mentors are trained intensely every quarter in both the philosophy and rationale of the activities. A team of researchers interact with mentors every week about their experiences and take detailed notes (termed as 'call notes'). The mentors also submit weekly or monthly reports on their activities reflecting on various aspects of their interaction with the adolescents (termed as 'monthly reports'). These notes and reports are analysed before developing the next sequence of activities and the training plan for the following quarter. The interactions with the community also form part of the mentors' feedback and add to the process of model development. In

the next phase, we will include specific activities that will allow for greater interaction with teachers and the community which, we hope, will add to the process of building the mentoring model.

It is anticipated that over a period of time, we will be able to analyse both the qualitative and the quantitative data collected over three years to arrive at an analytical framework of mentoring as well as a functioning model that can be adopted by schools. Given that our focus is on understanding the reasons for failure or push-backs from the community, the framework of action research allows us to identify challenges on the ground and respond to them continually. Our methodology, therefore, is conceptualised to ensure the mentorship model is not static and that our work with adolescents is truly participatory.

Table 1: Characteristics of students

Sr. No.	Site category	% of boys	% of girls	Average age	% of OBC students	% of SC/ST students	% of Muslim students
1	Government schools	40%	60%	11.9	46%	17%	28%
2	Madrasa	50%	50%	13.6	0%	0%	100%
3	Krantipur school	0%	100%	11.5	56%	38%	2%
4	Jashpur School	0%	100%	12.4	51%	17%	6%
		35%	65%	12.1	42%	16%	33%

Source: CBPS Baseline Survey, 2018
Note: Names of schools have been changed to maintain anonymity

In some ways, the data from the baseline will be used to continually re-design the components of the mentoring model as we move along with this process. The baseline survey was designed by CBPS based on our literature review and conducted on behalf of CBPS by Sunai Consultancy, a non-governmental research organisation based in Patna. The findings in this summary report are based on the data collected by the survey, the field notes of CBPS members as well as interactions with mentors in each of the districts.

3 Educational Institutions

Educational institutions are among the primary sites of the socialisation of children. Schools are where they learn about the world, how to interact with each other, how to direct their actions to achieve their goals. Because children spend so much time within these institutions, it is important to study the socio-cultural environments of these institutions. At the start, we had selected twelve schools (see Table 2). However, because of various factors, we have not been able to work with two of the schools, one in Patna and one in Muzaffarpur. Moreover, we were not able to collect school-level information from one of the discontinued schools. So, all of the subsequent analyses in this section are pertinent to only 11 schools.

Table 2: Characteristics of Schools

Sr. No.	Site category	Number	Location	Management	School type	Classes taught
1	Government schools	8	Peri-urban and rural	Government-run school	Co-ed and Hindi medium	Classes 1 to 8
2	Madrasa	1	Urban	Government-affiliated school	Co-ed and Hindi/Urdu medium*	Classes 1 to 12
3	Krantipur school	1	Rural	Government-run school	All girls Hindi medium	Classes 1 to 8
4	Jashpur School	1	Urban	NGO (Charity)	All girls Hindi medium	Classes 1 to 7

**50% of the students reported it as a Hindi-medium school while 50% students reported it as anUrdu-medium school*
Note: Information at site level for the madrasa in Patna is not available since permission wasdenied
Source: CBPS Baseline Survey, 2018

3.1 Children

We find that more girls than boys are enrolled at the primary and upper primary levels of schooling and the representation of girls starts to increase as we move from primary to upper primary levels. In Patna, for example, we find that in one of the schools, the gap between girls and boys starts to increase dramatically at the upper primary levels. We posit that this might be due the presence of private schools in the vicinity. This often indicates that when families are making choices about education, they are likely to send boys to private schools and girls to public schools.

In addition to these enrolment trends, we found that regardless of the enrolment rates of these schools, adolescents are not always attending the schools. Enrolment rates and attendance rates in many of these schools do not match. Due to the low attendance, we also looked at the comprehension and literacy skills of the adolescents in these schools. We found that the literacy rates are quite low in both sets of schools, although they are much lower in Muzaffarpur than in Patna. In some schools in Muzaffarpur, only a few students can read and write. Understandably, this is a cause of great concern.

3.2 Teachers

A number of activities that we have designed in BMP require the active engagement of teachers as they are the primary actors that shape the ways in which students

internalise and externalise their knowledge. When we look at the composition of teachers, we find that almost universally, women teachers were more in number compared to men and there appear to be more teachers in the OBC and General categories as compared to other social categories. We also looked to the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) to provide information on the nature of the interaction between children and their teachers. We found that they are quite high (1:42 on an average), with only one of the schools of the 11 being lower than 1:30.

Table 3: Characteristics of Teachers

Sr. No.	School name	PTR	% teachers graduates and above	% teachers completing B.Ed.	% of female teachers	% of SC/ST teachers	% of OBC teachers	% of Muslim teachers
1	Govt. schools	1:41	53.6%	35.8%	55.4%	12.5%	50%	8.9%
2	Madrasa	1:53	77.8%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
3	Krantipur school	1:100	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%
4	Jashpur School	1:39	54.6%	27.3%	100%	Refused to answer caste related questions		
	GRAND TOTAL	1:42	57.1%	29.9%	55.8%	10.4%	36.4%	18.2%

Note: Information at site level for the madrasa in Patna is not available since permission was denied

Source: CBPS Baseline Survey, 2018

Another issue that influences PTR in terms of their availability and accessibility to their students are the actual duties of the teachers. Our field observations suggested that teachers across all sites were often called on for extra duty apart from their teaching assignments. During the normal course of events, at any given time, two or three teachers are often missing from school due to this reason.

3.3 Schools

On the whole, we found that physical accessibility to schools was not a major hurdle as many students often walk to school. We also found that most of the schools had pucca buildings, although some of these schools had broken walls and floors which required some repair. When we examined their immediate learning environments, we found that apart from two, most schools did not have separate classrooms for each of the designated classes. However, the schools with limited space are trying to make the best of their limited resources. For example, in one of the schools, the administration was able to rent a single room in the vicinity so as to ensure that they were able to use it for their classes. Another school divided the school time into separate shifts to accommodate all the students.

We also documented the presence of boundary walls in the schools as it has implications on the safety of spaces in which students can play and run. Boundary walls also help in creating a sense of community within the school. We found that only five schools in all of our sample had boundary walls. We also found that in one of the schools in Patna, the absence of a boundary wall created a lot of disturbance in the school, witha number of fellow villagers, farmers and cattle crossing the premises of the school on a regular basis. This also meant that in these spaces, students had fewer possibilities of physical play, exercise and freedom to move and run around.

When we look at the water facilities, we found that all of the schools had access to clean drinking water and most had drinking water facilities available through a handpump installed within the compound. In two of the schools, the students had access to RO water filters as well.

The availability and functionality of toilets is a critical area of concern, especially for girls entering puberty. We found that apart from one school in Muzaffarpur, no school had gender-segregated toilets. In contrast, because of the joint efforts by the school and an NGO, except for one school, all the schools in Patna had gender-segregated toilets. Although most of the schools had toilets, their use was not necessarily universal. For example, in one of the schools, even though the toilets were installed, the fixtures were broken and therefore could not be used. In another, the girls' toilets were constructed so close to the boys' open cubicle toilets that both groups felt uncomfortable using them.

Table 4: School Infrastructure

	School Category	% schools with boundary wall	% schools with functional library	% schools with separate toilet for girls	% schools with electricity	% schools with upper primary classes having separate classrooms
1	Government Schools	25%	12.5%	25%	25%	62.5%
2	Madrasa	100%	0%	0%	100%	100%
3	Krantipur school	100%	0%	NA	100%	0%
4	Jashpur School	100%	100%	NA	100%	100%
	GRAND TOTAL	63.6%	18.2%	36.4%	63.6%	63.6%

Note: Information at site level for the madrasa in Patna is not available since permission was denied

Source: CBPS Baseline Survey, 2018

In terms of the learning facilities available to the students, we found that none of the schools had a separate room allocated as a library. However, each school attempted to create a space that was named 'Library'. For example, in one of the schools, books were placed on benches in one of the classrooms and in other schools, children had access to text books that they could use on the occasion that they did not have their own. Despite

the availability of books in some of the schools, we noticed that none of them had a separate time allocated for reading as a library period and none of the students in all the schools could borrow these books to take home.

We found that the seating arrangement and the facilities told us about the gendered dynamics within each of the schools. Across all the sites in both districts, the students either use desks or mats to sit on during class hours. Curiously, who sits on the mats and who sits on the desks appear to be highly gendered. For example, in one of the schools, only the boys are allowed to sit on the benches and the girls have to sit on the mats on the floor. In other schools, there appears to be an age hierarchy with respect to seating arrangements with students from the lower classes sitting on mats and the higher classes sitting on benches in their classrooms. The lack of benches for all students have consequences for learning within the classroom, as it becomes extremely difficult for all students to sit on floors especially in the chilly winter.

We found that Mid-Day Meals (MDMs) are provided at all the sites except the one which is privately run. We have observed a positive impact of MDMs on attendance of students. But we also noticed that most students leave the school as soon as the MDMs are consumed. In fact, one of the teachers told us that half of the school tends to empty out after the MDM is done. So, while there were benefits to the MDMs, we also found the quality of attendance within the schools was markedly influenced by the MDMs, and we must develop ways to change schools being seen as only 'nutritional' centres and not educational institutions.

Despite the diversity of the schools in our sample, there are some similar structural issues such as patterns of attendance, teacher availability, absence of critical infrastructure and the influence of government schemes that cuts across all of these schools. Keeping this in mind, we now move to understanding other structural factors such as the family that influence adolescent lives.

4 Households

The families and the households in which the students grow can have tremendous influence on the way they look at the world, how they think about themselves, what they hold dear, culturally and socially, as well as their willingness to learn and understand the world around them. Hence, as a part of our study, we have examined the socio-economic status and other household characteristics to understand the nature of impact that these factors may have on the lives of adolescents.

4.1 Household demographics

Household demographics can reflect the living conditions of adolescents. We first examined the type of housing that they lived in. We found that about half of the adolescents (53%) reported to be living in a pucca house and the other half (46%) reported to be living in semi-pucca and kuccha houses respectively. Pucca houses were higher in Patna at almost two thirds (69%) of the total houses. We also looked at the type

of toilets in each of the houses and found that 70% of the adolescents surveyed belonged to households which had a private toilet within or outside the house premises and 25% of them still practiced open defecation. In Patna, 78% of the adolescents reported access to a private toilet as compared to 62% in Muzaffarpur.

We also decided to investigate the physical space available to adolescents. We used it as a measure of poverty. The density of members within a household point to the lack of resources and land available. We also used it to understand the levels of privacy afforded to individuals within the household. We found that about 9.2% of the students lived in households with just one room in the household. Households with two, three, and four rooms were 28%, 22% and 19% respectively.

When we look at the density of the people within the household, we find that a little more than half of the adolescents belonged to households where two people or less shared a room in the household. 21% of them shared a room with two other people and about one fourth of them shared a room with three or more people. Between Patna and Muzaffarpur, there was no significant difference in the number of people sharing a room.

Objects within the household are critical to understand the material and social conditions of the family. Household assets are, to some extent, reflective of the economic status and to the quality of life. Our data shows that the number of household assets possessed by households in Patna was higher than in Muzaffarpur (5.9 assets vs. 4.8 assets, respectively). However, households in Muzaffarpur possessed more agricultural assets than the households in Patna due to the rural nature of the Muzaffarpur sample. If we examine the ownerships of assets particular to rural areas, we find that 80% of the households in Muzaffarpur possessed at least one agricultural asset in comparison to Patna, with just 29% of the latter possessing an agricultural asset, which was most commonly found to be livestock. This shows that the sample households from Muzaffarpur still owned livestock and hence could be partially orwholly dependent on them for a living.

The most commonly available assets in the household were mobile phone (100%), cot/bed (98%), electric fan (91%), LPG (84%) and gas stove (82%). The least available household assets were motorcycle (36%), refrigerator (22%) and car (3%). We also examined ownership of luxury assets (like a refrigerator) which require high usage of electricity and found that 32.6% of the total households in Patna possessed a refrigerator as against just 9% of the total households in Muzaffarpur.

Family demographics

The educational level of the parents can have a considerable influence on the educational attainment of the child and their overall development. The social capital accrued through a higher educational status (and often livelihood) is passed onto the next generation, who are then supported to continue or better the social mobility experienced by the parents. Conversely, low socio-economic status or low parental educational levels affect family interaction patterns and aspirations which often have a detrimental influence on

academic and achievement-oriented attitudes over time.

In our sample, we find that 26% of the fathers of the adolescents have had no education, whereas about 41% of them had an education level of upper primary and above and just about 5% had some vocational training or degree. The educational levels of mothers were much lower at 40% of them having no education and 29% with education levels of primary and above. Mothers with some kind of vocational training or a degree were a mere 1%. We also wanted to specifically investigate whether parental knowledge can potentially have a bearing on the children. We investigated the adolescents' knowledge of various languages. We found that among the students who said they knew how to speak English, 49% of them had mothers who had attained an education level of more than upper primary and above, as against 39% of students whose mothers had below primary or no education at all.

Table 5: Household Profile

District	Patna	Muzaffarpur	Grand Total
% of households with pucca roofing	69%	34%	53%
% of households with private toilet	78%	62%	70%
% of households with two rooms and less	36%	40%	37%
% of mothers with no education	35%	47%	40%
% of mothers with education level of primary and above	32%	26%	29%
% of households with at least one family member migrating	18%	42%	29%
Among migrating members, % migrating for work	74%	92%	86%
Among migrating members, % migrating for education	23%	4%	11%
% of households with at least one agricultural asset	29%	80%	53%

Source: CBPS Baseline Survey, 2018

Very similar to parents' education, parents' occupations can have a significant impact on the education, mobility and occupational choices of adolescents. When we looked at the occupational distribution of family members, 39% of the sample consisted of students. These were mostly the siblings of the students in our sample. The next category of livelihoods was unpaid domestic work (16%), primarily women (95%). About 10% reported to be doing some business, six per cent said they were doing some factory work, three per cent said they were doing construction work and three per cent were farmers who tilled their own land, two per cent were rickshaw drivers, two per cent tailors and two per cent casual labourers. When we looked at the gendered distribution of the professions, we found that mostly men were engaged in occupations such as factory workers (97%), construction workers (96%) and rickshaw drivers (99%).

From the data, it is clear that the majority of the adolescents have family members who

are engaged in jobs in the unorganised sector. The links of this participation in informal and unorganised labour to the social and economic capital of families is well-known. So, it is very likely that these adolescents are particularly vulnerable and subject to the same vagaries and uncertainties of the informal and unorganised labour markets as their parents.

To understand these vulnerabilities in greater detail, we also asked questions related to migration within the family as Bihar is a primary source state for migratory labour. We found that 30% of the adolescents in our sample reported at least one migration in the family. Among the people migrating, 92% of them were men, with 44% being the father of the student and 48% being some other male family member. Among the migrants, about half of them usually migrated about two-three times in a year whereas about 41% of them migrated once in a year. In our sample, about half of the migrants migrated for a duration of 10-12 months whereas 21% of them reported migrating for less than six months. This can again be attributed as seasonal migration during a lull in the agricultural period.

The most common reasons for migration were for work, with 82% of the adolescents stating that the migration was for work and about 10% reporting migration for education. When we look at district-wise figures for migration, we find that, 91% of all the migrants from Muzaffarpur migrate for work and just 4% migrate for education unlike Patna where about 61% said they migrated for work whereas 22% of them migrated for education. This clearly highlights the fact that socio-economic conditions of the geographical space influence the nature and purpose of migration.

From the analyses, it is clear that the adolescent sample of our intervention is divided in terms of various demographic parameters. Some of them are doing much better than others in various socio-economic indicators from living conditions and access to sanitation to transportation facilities. We also see patterns in terms of the educational status and livelihoods of the family that help us understand the social worlds of the adolescents with whom we are working.

5 Adolescent lives

To design the BMP, it was important for us to be grounded in the realities of adolescent lives instead of postulating about or imagining their lives from afar. First, we wanted to get a sense of how they spend their time. What we are examining here are the ways in which adolescents themselves perceive their own lives and what comprises their everyday activities.

We found that the adolescents spend the majority of their time in school. Moreover, the site for most of the socialisation that the adolescent experiences is within an educational institution of some kind. If we count the time spent in school, the time spent in tuition classes and the time spent in doing homework after they come back from school, it appears that adolescents spend more than seven hours in the day just doing school work,

with very slight gender variations (449 minutes for boys as compared to 453 minutes for girls).

Another point of interest was time spent in leisure and play. We find that regardless of gender, adolescents appear to be spending approximately 3.1 hours on a given day on some form of leisure or play activity. We also wanted to examine if adolescents worked in their family farms or elsewhere. Majority of them appear not to have understood this question, as we have about 428 girls and 202 boys who did not answer this question. Of those who did talk about working on their family farm or business, 28 girls reported spending 1.45 hours doing unpaid family work as compared to 46 boys who spend 1.76 hours of unpaid family work.

One of the easiest ways to establish gender differences within the household is to examine care work done by girls and women within the household. In the literature and even in our own study around adolescent girls, we have found that girls take up bulk of the care work responsibilities while boys are much more likely to pursue leisure activities. We found similar results here as well. Girls report spending an average of 117 minutes on housework as compared to 94 minutes for boys. In fact, when we examine adolescents who spend a significant amount of time doing unpaid domestic work, we can clearly see the over-representation of girls (42 girls as compared to 13 boys) who spend 15% of their entire day doing unpaid care work. Although not always visible when we look at the average distribution of time (Figure 2 and 3), these gendered differences, especially at the highest and the lowest ends, provide us some indicators of the stability of gender norms within the household.

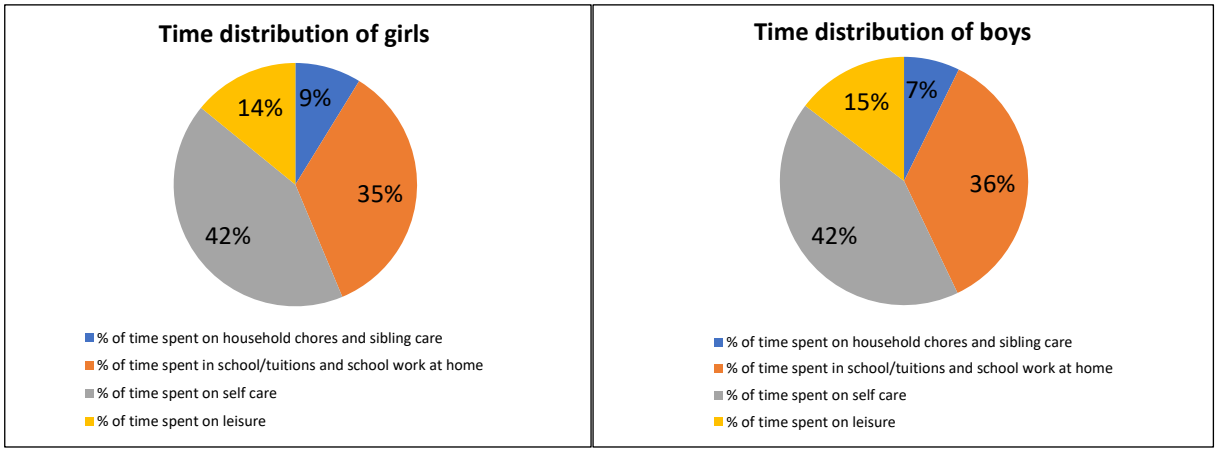
When we break down this care work to particular duties, we found very strong gender patterns. Almost all of the girls do some form of cooking (95%), cleaning (81%), and washing (86%). When the activities start to get less gender-typed, such as fetching water or purchasing groceries, we find the percentage of boys slowly increasing in these activities. For instance, about 32% of boys report fetching water and nearly 55% of the boys report purchasing groceries. These patterns are universal across religion, regional variation and caste which provides us with ample evidence as to the unequal burden shouldered by young women and girls.

To understand the social lives of adolescents, we looked at social networks employed by children as they play a significant role in creation of an individual or collective identity, provide important coping strategies for multiple stressors and lay the basis for the development of good social and networking skills. What we found was that about 81% of the students said that they had friends both inside and outside school, suggesting a strong circle and network of friends.

When we look at the gender dynamics with respect to friend networks, we find that a majority of both the boys and the girls have friends in school and outside of it, although a slightly higher percentage of boys reported strong friend networks (89%) compared to girls (77%). A higher percentage of girls reported that they had friends only in school

(17%) as compared with the boys (9%) and we see similar trends even with friends outside of class (girls: 4%; boys 2%).

Figure 2: Time Distribution



Source: CBPS Baseline Survey, 2018

We also found that despite these strong friend networks, a majority of the students did not engage in any support-related activities with their friends (72% boys and 68% girls). Instead, they are more likely to turn to their mother for support. For example, the girls (54%) saw their mothers as a main source of social support along with boys (46%). In fact, there are clear indications that mothers and other female members of the family are affective sources of support for children. To understand more about these gendered preferences, we now turn to gendered attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.

6 Gendered attitudes, beliefs and behaviours

In order to gauge the perception of gender roles and attitudes towards gender, weasked the adolescents specific questions related to situations that would provide some understanding of the ideology behind their responses. We wanted to get a sense of their overall gendered knowledge and understanding through these questions. Our questions ranged from those on the physical strength and capabilities of girls and boys, career aspirations, gendered attitudes towards health to the dynamics of shame, violence, marriage and caste.

6.1 Physical strength and capabilities

We asked them who would win a race, a boy or a girl. When we look at the gendered distribution of this answer, we find that 58% of the girls said that a girl would win as compared to 25% of boys. It should not come as a surprise that an overwhelmingly large percentage of boys (72%) believed the boy would win as compared to the girls (37%). When we compare it to the gender distribution of our sample, we can easily see that even though there were many girls who believed that girls would win, there were more girls than boys who believed that boys would win the race. When asked to state the reason for their choice, majority of the adolescents believed that the boy would win because, in

general, boys run faster than girls. Those who believed that the girl would win stated that 'girls can run just as fast as boys.'

To dig deeper into their understanding of gendered capabilities, we also asked them whether boys would be better at maths than girls, and we found that 65% of the adolescents agreed. Another gender stereotype that we explored was whether women cry more than men as the former are more emotional. A majority believed this to be true (86%) and this belief was universally held among both boys (88%) and girls (86%). We see these entrenched attitudes regarding gendered capabilities even with respect to the leadership capabilities. When asked whether men make better Chief Ministers (CMs) than women, 65% of the adolescents believed that men are. In fact, 71% of the boys said men would be better although 33% of the girls disagreed with them. To understand whether these attitudes related to strength and capabilities extends to the way that adolescents can imagine their own futures, we asked specific questions related to career aspirations and division of labour.

6.2 Career aspirations and division of labour

In order to get a sense of their knowledge of the gendered nature of work, both inside and outside of the home, we presented some situation-based questions. First, we asked whether a girl who wanted to become a cricketer should pursue this profession. We found, much to our surprise, that 71% said that the girl should work towards her ambition. Many girls (74%) fully endorsed that the girl could become a cricketer and, more surprisingly, more than half of the boys (66%) endorsed it as well.

In the second scenario, we asked whether a boy who wanted to become a nurse should pursue the profession when he grows up. In response, we found highly gendered answers. About 49% of the children did not think that the boy should become a nurse. Out of this, 62% were male students. Interestingly, only 43 % of the girls felt that the boy should not become a nurse. In fact, more than 50% of the girls reported that he should become a nurse if he wants to be one. Those who were not in agreement overwhelmingly reported (90%) that the boy should not become a nurse because they thought that men do not become nurses and it is not a suitable career aspiration for a man.

We also wanted to know whether work inside the home was similarly gender-typed. We presented a scenario where a boy comes home to find his brother cooking in the kitchen since his sister-in-law had gone for a movie with her friends. The adolescents were asked their opinion regarding the situation. More than half (about 58%) said that cooking was primarily a woman's job, but it was alright for the brother to cook in an exceptional situation where there were no women present in the household. About 44%also reported that the brother should not cook, since cooking for the household is the responsibility of the women. It is clear from these analyses that adolescents do have a clear understanding of the division of the labour within and outside of their homes and have some comprehension of the gendered expectations related to paid and care work.

6.3 Health

Health has been one of the great dividers between the privileged and the marginalised. This is also true for gender, where a gendered division of food within the household is common and a high level of stigma related to the natural bodily functions of a woman. To address both these attitudes, we asked a series of questions. First, we asked a situation-based question where they were given options to choose between the girl getting a full plate of food, a half plate of food and both boys and girls getting a full plate of food. We found that 71% of the students said that the girl should get the plate full of food, 18 % of them wanted her to get the half plate and 10 % wanted the girl and theboy to get an equal amount of food. When we looked at the gender distribution, we found that 76% of the girls wanted the girl to get the full plate of food. Disturbingly, 23% of the boys felt that the girl should not get the full plate of food.

We also decided to find out more about adolescent awareness related to menstruation. We asked a true-or-false question about whether girls after the age of 12-13 bleed every month; essentially, whether they menstruate every month. A little less than half of the children did not know the answer (45%), 44% agreed with the statement, and 10% felt that the statement was false. The gendered distribution of these answers shows that a little over half of the girls (57%) knew about menstruation but an alarming 70% of the boys did not know the answer.

Related to the question on menstruation, we also asked whether women can be touched during menstruation. We found that about 37% did not agree that women should not be touched while menstruating, 34% agreed and 28% did not appear to know the answer. More girls (39%) than boys (26%) believed the statement to be true. We also found that when shown the picture of a sanitary pad, only 28% were able to identify it correctly. The ignorance of the boys could be attributed to two factors: (1) they really did not know and (2) they were hesitant to answer a question on a topic that is believed to be sensitive or taboo for boys to answer. Regardless of the reason, these trends show us that despite the education around health, adolescents are still quite unaware of basic notions of health and menstruation. It is vital, therefore, that the silence around this topic needs to be broken not just for the sake of girls but also to build boys as allies in this process.

Table 6: Gendered attitudes and behaviour

Gendered Attitudes		Boys	Girls	Total
Physical strengths				
Gudia and Bablu both participate in a race. They are of the same age and live in the same locality. If one of them comes first in the race, who according to you will it be?	Gudia will win	25%	58%	46%
	Bablu will win	72%	37%	49%
In general, boys have more physical strength than girls	Right	84%	80%	82%
	Wrong	15%	18%	17%
Capabilities and gender roles				
Boys are smarter when it comes to mathematics	Right	76%	60%	65%
	Wrong	23%	39%	33%
Girls usually cry more than boys because they are more emotional	Right	88%	85%	86%
	Wrong	9%	12%	11%
Gudia wants to become a professional cricket player when she grows up. Should she become one?	Yes	66%	74%	71%
	No	32%	19%	23%
Bablu wants to become a nurse when he grows up. Should he become one?	Yes	37%	50%	46%
	No	62%	43%	49%
Health, Hygiene and Nutrition				
Can you identify the object? 	Sanitary napkin	10%	37%	28%
	Slippers / Sole	5%	1%	2%
	Diapers	13%	3%	6%
	Don't know	65%	57%	60%
Girls generally need less food and nutrition than boys	Right	43%	34%	37%
	Wrong	55%	61%	59%
Girls after the age of 12-13 bleed once every month. This is called menstruation.	Right	19%	57%	44%
	Wrong	8%	11%	10%
	Don't know	70%	32%	45%
Girls while menstruating are impure and should not be touched	Right	26%	39%	34%
	Wrong	33%	39%	37%
	Don't know	41%	21%	28%
Honour, shame and violence				
Husbands can be put in jail if they beat their wives	Right	79%	79%	79%
	Wrong	19%	19%	19%
It is right for husbands to beat their wives if they refuse to obey them	Right	62%	48%	53%
	Wrong	36%	48%	44%
Only girls get sexually assaulted/raped	Right	58%	50%	53%
	Wrong	33%	39%	37%
	Don't know	9%	10%	10%
Gudia and Bablu both have to wear half pants (shorts) for the	Wear the half pant	28%	41%	36%

Gendered Attitudes		Boys	Girls	Total
running event. Gudia's friends tell her not to wear shorts because people will laugh. What should Gudia do?	Not wear the half pant (shorts)	70%	55%	60%
Marriage and caste				
Girls can marry anyone (any caste, class religion) as per their choice after 18	Right	31%	35%	34%
The legal age of marriage is 18 for girls in India	Right	92%	89%	90%
	Don't know	2%	4%	3%

Source: CBPS Baseline Survey, 2018.

6.4 Violence, Shame, and Marriage

Because of the centrality of the concepts of honour, violence and marriage in terms of gender attitudes, we wanted to capture the attitudes towards violence held by adolescents. They were first asked whether husbands could be jailed if they beat their wives and then asked them whether it was right for the husband to beat their wives if they refused to obey them. We found that 79% maintained that the first statement was true. There weren't any prominent differences between boys and girls in each of these areas. For the second statement, we found that just a little over half (53%) agreed with the statement implying *also* that a significant number (44%) didn't. When we look at the gendered nature of this attitude, we find that more boys (62%) agreed with the statement that husbands can beat their wives if they were disobeyed compared to the girls (48%). We also wanted to know about their awareness and understanding related to sexual assault of men. When asked whether only women could be raped, 53% agreed.More boys (58%) than girls (50%) believed this to be true.

In order to understand the relationship between violence, honour, and shame, we asked if it was true that women who get sexually assaulted are mostly at fault. It was heartening to note that the majority did not agree with the statement (65%), with a slightly higher number of girls (68%) reporting that the statement as false as compared to boys (59%).

To explore gendered aspects associated with practices of marriage and caste, we asked them a few simple questions. We first wanted to know whether they were aware of the legal age of marriage and it appeared that most were (90%). We then asked them whether men and women can marry whoever they want, regardless of caste or religion. We found that 63% of the students disagreed with the statement with very little variation between boys (66%) and girls (62%), showing that the entrenched values of endogamy and the taboo on exogamy were already clear for girls and boys as they barely reached adolescence.

Next, we wanted to tackle specific practices linked to caste. We asked whether they agreed with the statement that people belonging to the so-called 'low castes' should not be touched. Interestingly, 70% did not agree with it. The proportion of girls (73%) who disagreed with the statement was relatively more than the boys (64%). In order to know more about caste-based attitudes, the adolescents were given another statement in which they were asked to agree or disagree on whether so-called 'high caste' people were smarter than so-called 'low caste' people. The opinion was divided on this statement where 49% agreed and an equal proportion disagreed with the statement. We do find sexist attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in the social discourse reflected in the stated attitudes of the adolescents. This is not surprising as they often incorporate hegemonic influences and narratives in creating their own gendered identities.

7 Conclusion

The purpose of our project is to develop a mentoring model that will make the connection between education and empowerment stronger. We are designing the model so that adolescents are given the space, the tools and the time to build their own lives. Inorder for us to do that more effectively, we wanted to know the basic information about their lives – where they go to school, what they know, what families they come from and what they think? This baseline constitutes the first step in a conversation with underprivileged adolescents.

From the data, we know that the children in our study are impoverished and require many services, both at the school and at home. We can see that in the schools, basic infrastructure such as benches, toilets, playgrounds, rooms to study and libraries are not available. We can also see that school administrations are experiencing resource constraints, especially in terms of teacher shortages. While the state has progressive policies, it is important to put into place accountability systems that make schools more functional and can create a different educational ethos.

We can also see that the geographical location has social and economic consequences for the families and hence the children. We find that adolescents living in urban contexts are more likely to have a slightly better quality of living as determined by housing facilities, more likely to have parents working in better skilled jobs and are also more likely to gain language skills (especially English) than their counterparts in rural areas.

We found that the adolescents in our sample do have very engaged lives with their friends and their family. We also found that a large part of their lives are spent in some form of schooling or studying activity. Further, there is a sharp gender divide with regards to the care work done by adolescents.

Conventional gendered attitudes appear to have been internalised by both boys and girls. We find that by the time they hit the age of 11 and 14, adolescents have deeply entrenched attitudes that reinforce the larger social narrative that denigrates and subjects women and girls to a secondary position. If we look at their understanding of physical strength

and capabilities or their ideas about the appropriateness of a profession or who is responsible for cleaning, or endorsements of violence, we see adolescents reflecting larger patriarchal narratives. The case is similar when one talksof caste where dominant attitudes persist.

These findings on their gendered and casteist attitudes affirm our belief that a mentoring model able to provide information about the larger world enabling adolescents to form their own understandings of the world is urgently required. Our mentoring model cannot move away from the immediate contexts of its setting and these findings have implications on the design of the BMP. It is an important time to provide critical spaces, discourses and tools so adolescents may question values and take action to counter adversarial influences on their own lives. A priority area for us is to foreground conversations around gender and caste into the pedagogy. As can be seen, boys and girls have internalised gender and caste narratives and these play out in the classrooms constantly. We really need to focus on unpacking these ingrained narratives and beliefs and push the children to start thinking about the 'rationales' behind these beliefs through various games, activities, plays, and self- reflection exercises.

One of the primary implications for the BMP is to address literacy levels. The mentorship activities were originally designed assuming that the children would have rudimentary literacy skills. However, even though they are interested to learn and try their best to make use of their rudimentary skills, without support mechanisms of ancillary literacy services, literacy levels will remain unacceptable. To tackle this challenge, we have been devising new ways of reconfiguring literacy-based activities. Although not always successful, this is helping us to work with adolescents in a much more involved manner.

Another primary aspect is the relationship between the teacher and the student. We find that teachers often reflect the social norms and discourses present in the communities. It is important, then, to ensure that they are interested in the activities as well. We clearly see that when teachers are involved, the activities conducted are more effective. While disinterest and apathy in teachers is also a reality in the classrooms we are working in, we find that teachers who are interested are also time-restricted. They are often overburdened with work themselves and it is difficult to get their time unless there are concerted efforts to ensure they are also given the time and space to co-build the model along with the students.

We strongly feel that this baseline study provides us with the foundational information through which further action can be undertaken. It shows us the realities on the ground and helps us unpack layers of the social dynamics experienced by adolescents. Any mentoring model that we develop, therefore, has to take into consideration not just building on this theoretical and practical knowledge but *use* this knowledge to help adolescents become more engaged with the world so that they can build their own visions and futures.

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