



School Health Program

Guide Lines for Teachers

Students' Health in Schools



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



**School
Health
Program**

TEACHERS GUIDE *on* **SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAMME**



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This booklet has been developed by UNESCO Islamabad. It is anticipated that the booklet would create awareness among parents, students, teachers, and head teachers of public as well as private educational institutions so that they could take care of students' health in and outside the schools.

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1. SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAM

1.1 Students' engagement in dialogue on Gender Equality and Health

Gender inequality is not a natural phenomenon, rather it is socially constructed. It cannot be denied that both women and men deserve equal right. Biological features of men and women may though be distinctive, but their fundamental rights are the same and equal. Unfortunately, the historical legacy of the predominant patriarchal nature of most societies and the influence it had on peoples' mind set have continued affecting women from practicing fully the rights bestowed upon them by religion and the constitution. Women's effective participation in decision-making processes that have direct bearing to socio-economic and socio-political aspects of their lives is seriously lacking. Discrimination, violence and social injustice against women still persist.

The sociologists around the world are of a firm opinion that sustainable development cannot be achieved unless men and women are given equal representation and participation in all walks of life. Comparatively developed societies have been able to achieve their economic growth and social progress by virtue of institutionalizing human rights and equality, and by eliminating gender discrimination well ahead in time than in societies from poorer countries. They start instilling in their younger generations the sense of equity and justice from the childhood. They have created equal opportunities for boys and girls so that they are brought up equally in order to play a positive role in their country's socio-economic development.

In Pakistan, there is a dire need to strengthen a common understanding of gender issues and make a concerted effort to address them. Much still needs to be done in our society to recognize the important socio-political roles that women can play, especially in villages where local and tribal customs prohibit women's participation in local development and inclusive decision-making processes. The dismal state of women's rights in different social sectors of the country has been highlighted by several studies. Some examples are listed below:

Education

- The ratio of girls among out-of-school children is much higher than boys
- The number of illiterate women is greater than men
- In the absence of co-educational culture, the number of schools and colleges dedicated for female fall remarkably shorter than their male counterparts

Health

- In Pakistan, only 24 percent of women have access to health facilities
- When it comes to treatment of common diseases, men are given preferences over women
- Female death rate is higher than that of male
- Generally, girls suffer from the lack of parental care, diet imbalance and unavailability of physical activities, which leads to their inferior health since childhood
- Lack of opportunities in health education and jobs has made women recessive in virtually all walks of life

Care and Affection

- It is commonly observed in Pakistani society that birth of baby boys is celebrated with esteem as compared to the birth of baby girls
- In the fulfillment of common day-to-day needs, boys are usually given preference over girls
- The ingrained social belief of boys being the breadwinner for families makes them receive more attention than girls

These examples clearly ring an alarming bell. Gender issues need to be debated not only among adults but also among children, which to some extent is addressed through the school curricula. However, teachers' capacity to deliver the gender concept among students is still a serious issue. Teachers need to be better prepared to ensure that their pedagogical engagement with students yields positive results in understanding and addressing gender issues. Teachers are responsible not only to impart gender knowledge among students but also to help them recognize how gender stereotype and sexual discrimination take effect in and outside school premise. The fact that teachers can themselves be part of the problem than solution need to be consciously considered in training programmes.

Following are some of the examples where teachers unintentionally promote prejudices in classroom:

- Putting fewer questions to girls than boys in the classroom inadvertently promotes a feeling of inferiority among females
- Delegating important jobs to boys, and engaging girls only in household and menial chores reinforces gender stereotype
- Instinctively targeting girls with undue criticism upon minor mistakes discourages them to think and argue critically

These and other possible gender biased and discriminatory scenarios must be discussed openly and critically among teachers so that they are conscious of their own conduct and maintain a good gender health in the classrooms. Therefore, along with children's physical fitness, we should also be mindful of the wellbeing of their emotional and mental state of health.

GENDER EQUALITY

The following narrative tells us how the will and just stance of parents in educating their girls can trigger an attitudinal change in whole community. It highlights the fact that unless both men and women are equally capable of understanding the problems and solving them, the nation as a whole would never be able to command a respectable position.

This is the story of Ali Sher who lives in a small town in District Dadu. He has two sons and a daughter who attend Government High School Murad Goth, two kilometers away from their home. Most of the households in this community do not allow their girls to go to school beyond 3rd or 4th grade, citing various social excuses, whereas, the boys are allowed to attend schools as long as they desire. On the contrary, Ali Sher refutes such ungrounded fears and contends that education, like food and water, is equally important for the better upbringing of all children. He not only treats his daughter as equal to his sons, but also provides her with similar educational opportunities to realize her potential. Such a high faith and conviction of Ali helped his daughter develop a towering self-esteem and confidence. She not only excels in her classroom, but her poise allows her to conveniently express her likes and dislikes to people around her.

Unlike the other girls, she objectively makes her point with reasons and substance, and acts as an equal partner in the family's decision making process. Ali deems this as not something to be feared of, as the community believes, rather he thinks it like giving voice to the nation's future mothers. He believes that unless both men and women do not complement each other, the society at large would never prosper.

Now, as Ali's daughter reaches 10th grade, accomplished and competent as her male peers, the community at large has begun to envy and appreciate her parent's belief. It is Ali's firm commitment to education that has made his cynics to see the true importance of female health and education, and the role it plays in the country's socio-economic development.

It is a recognized fact that any progressive society stands on two equally important pillars; men and women, who stand together shoulder to shoulder to move the nation forward.

1.2 School as a Social Institution

School is a social institution where boys and girls undergo physical, mental, emotional and social upbringing. It acts as an incubator where the nurturing of child's natural capabilities takes place. Education itself is a process that enhances the potential of a child to maximum, so that he or she could become productive citizen, and contribute towards the betterment of society and country.

Balanced upbringing of both boys and girls during the education process is dependent on many factors but it is their health that plays the most important role. If a child is physically and mentally fit, he or she is more likely to succeed in all walks of life.

Schools are the key to character building, and they should focus on following crucial aspects of their students:

- Physical growth
- Mental development

- Moral development
- Social upbringing
- Emotional development
- Aesthetic development

Studies have proved that during the education process if the above mentioned characteristics are duly taken care of, children grow up to become valuable and productive assets of the society. As adults they are filled with empathy, care and love for family, friends and strangers alike. They are found to be more tolerant to others' views and beliefs, harbor no gender discrimination, and show extreme sensitivities to the poor, and to the environment surrounding them.

Role of Educational Institution in Inclusive Development of Students

Educational institution is like a big home or miniature society, which not only transforms young people into successful citizens, but also prepares them for constructive roles in their lives. It makes them think critically about the problems confronting them, and enables them to find the most suitable solutions. It is, therefore, critically important that schools need to bear semblance to home and society.

School's formal atmosphere makes young children mentally disposed to learn. Here they could easily be molded to play their societal role in a constructive way. Teachers in this regard bear the obligation to stir critical debates in classrooms, which should instill in students the importance of social responsibilities.

In case of Pakistan, unfortunately, the focus of educational institutions has mostly remained on Cover rather than on Content. The system has historically centered on producing Degrees rather than Character. The desired set of change, as envisioned in country's national policies, has not surfaced in younger generation, despite the fact that many progressive societies in other countries have been extremely successful in achieving national goals through their respective education systems. Some of the successful outcomes in such countries are mentioned below:

- Their education system inculcated in their youth the importance of balanced relationship between family, friends and society, the one that is based on mutual respect, harmony and cooperation
- They made them better understand their emotional, economic, and social needs, and taught them how to meet these needs in socially responsible way
- Their syllabi instilled in their younger generation the value of tolerance and dialogue towards others views and faiths, better understanding of human rights, environment and emerging situations.
- They taught them the principles of social cohesion and collectiveness so that the foundations of progressive society could be strengthened

After parents, teachers are the biggest drivers and catalyst of change. If they perform their duties with diligence and honesty, they could bring positive transformation in young generations.

Model of Inter-Faith Tolerance and Inclusive Education

This box presents a narrative of a school principal whose vision, planning and devotion transformed a rundown school into bastion of excellence. It tells us how a holistic, impartial and well-rounded policy can kindle the true purpose of an educational institution.

Mr Hamza was recently appointed as the principal of Government Secondary School, Khuzdar. Since joining the office, he has brought sea change in his school's culture, yet retaining the same teachers and students. His infallible faith in every human being makes him believe that every person has the capability and will to do better, if he or she is given right set of opportunities and responsibilities. According to him, the ultimate purpose of any educational institution is to explore and hone the skills of its students, and to channel their energies in a constructive fashion.

The very first step Hamza took was to make cleanliness an integral part of everyday life, thus fulfilling the religious and social obligation, and giving health the foremost importance. It was followed by plantation in and around the school premises to inculcate environmental concern in his pupils. He stresses upon the significance of education, tolerance and respect in the assembly speech every morning. During the staff meeting, he advises his teachers to act more as mentors, so that they should groom the students into responsible human beings. But these are not just the advices that made him achieve such marvels; it is his actions that allowed him to lead by example.

Unlike the past, when all the attention was given in making students good grading machines, Hamza gave special emphasis on co-curricular activities. He made sports mandatory; all the students were involved according to their individual talents and stamina. Likewise, Mr Hamza, himself an excellent orator, instituted a culture of Arts Societies that included weekly class-wide competitions. According to him, activities like the anthems, creative writing, poetry and speeches etc. complement the human personality, and refine the hidden soft skills, which are necessary for harnessing future leadership capabilities.

Another striking feature was the streamlining of school admission policy. He made sure that the school intake process was free of biases; rather he preferred to induct children with physical, social or financial challenges. He believed that children from different backgrounds only add to the beauty of school's diversity, which later formed the basis of an equitable society. To bring the minority and disadvantaged students into the mainstream, he personally took care of their education.

Hamza's bold and principled measures have put significant impact on the overall performance of his students. Parents are extremely happy as they not only see their children getting better grades, but also notice a remarkable improvement in their conduct.

But Hamza rightfully attributes this success to the dedication of teachers, and struggle of his students. He sees this achievement as the outcome of team effort, in which everyone plays his/her role dutifully. Whereas, he puts himself only as a binding force, that made this school one joint family, filled with vision, purpose and hope that they can do even better.

We as a nation bear following expectations from our educated youth:

- They must be aware of the fundamentals of good health, and should take care of their own and of those around them
- They respect elders, treat young ones with love, show regard to neighbors, and help others in their time of need

- Our youth must be informed of their social, legal and constitutional rights, and the ways to protect them
- They must have the prowess to avoid social ills such as dishonesty, deceit, abuse, corruption, etc.
- They should remain loyal to the fundamentals of their religion and state, and must act together as a nation
- They should not discriminate on the basis of color, gender, race, religion or language. Their character must be the embodiment of tolerance, goodwill and acceptance
- They should be conscious of hazards related to environmental degradation, and must work collectively to safeguard it

1.3 Inclusive Education and Health

The goals of “Education for All” could be met by Inclusive Education, which implies that *all children have the right to education*. The term Inclusive education encompasses transforming school infrastructure and environment in such a way that children with disabilities and financial constraints enjoy attending school without having to face physical, mental and emotional barriers. Bringing them to classroom is only half the struggle; the other half centers around meeting their needs, removing the barriers that hinder their free access to learning opportunities, and constantly engaging them in all the class activities.

The responsibility to look after such children and their health lies with the school, but before that we need to know the types of such children, which are mentioned below:

- Children having physical disabilities such as disabled limbs, stuttering, etc.
- Children who face hearing difficulty and thus cannot follow and interpret teacher’s lessons in the classroom
- Children with weak eye sight, who cannot read from the black board
- Children having mental disability, who find it difficult to learn new things
- Children who face problems coming to school due to long distance or impending dangers
- Children belonging to impoverished families, where the parents want them to earn instead of getting education
- Boys and girls who had been harassed by fellow students or teachers, and thus show reluctance going back to school
- Children belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, and marginalized communities who feel discriminated in school

A large portion of Pakistan’s illiterate population comprises children with above mentioned disabilities. It is the responsibility of teachers and institutional heads to do all-out efforts to bring these children into the fold, and help them bring about change in their lives.

The upbringing of children should be promoted as collective mission, a sacred act within and outside classrooms and schools to establish a learning environment, the one friendlier to Inclusive Education.

Approach to Inclusive Education

- Teachers should have a firm belief that all the children possess innate ability to learn, although some learn faster than others
- Making the classrooms and schools congenial to Inclusive Education, this makes the learning process productive and appealing
- Some children require more attention than others, thus an effort must be made to identify those with the such needs
- Students with disabilities are assimilated into the mainstream by critically analyzing and planning their need-fulfillment strategies. Likewise, such plans are improved incrementally by regular consultations with parents, teachers, and experts

Health and Education Side by Side

Good health is a huge blessing. Its importance can be gauged by the fact that illness deprives us of the many bounties of life, some even necessary for survival. Our sense of taste, smell and sight all adds up to our better judgment, positive thinking and valuable contribution. Good health thus allows us to become valuable citizen and virtuous human being.

A healthy person is able to:

- Enjoy the blessings of nature
- Worship with devotion and love
- Channel inborn capabilities in best possible manner
- Be more resilient, productive and hardworking
- Overcome difficulties with comparative ease
- Impervious to the attacks of various diseases
- Contribute productively towards the betterment of society and country

The wellbeing of nation depends on the health and education of its children, which forms the basis of progressive and inclusive society. As children spend most of their active time at schools, the teachers not only have responsibility to educate them, but also take care of their health.

School's environment plays an important role in the child's inclusive growth, thus it must be conducive and healthy. Teachers should engage their students in activities that not only provide them with dynamic learning experience, but also put a positive influence on their health. Numerous studies have shown that students achieve better results in healthier environment, which include:

- Availability of clean drinking water
- Hygienic bathrooms
- Spacious and ventilated classrooms
- Availability of space and facilities for physical activities

- Resting places for boys and girls
- Assistance for the handicapped students
- Periodic students health checkup
- Strict code of conduct on student's cleanliness (uniform, nails etc.)
- Placement of dustbins at convenient places

1.4 Education, Health and the Rights of Minorities

In Pakistan, students belonging to minority sects face numerous challenges. Despite several attempts by the Government to address these issues through laudable legislation, poor implementation hinders the execution process. Consequently, sixty-five years since independence, Pakistan's minority still faces numerous challenges in the spheres of:

1. Education
2. Health
3. Livelihood
4. Society

Morally and constitutionally, minorities of the country also enjoy equal health and educational rights. It is the duty of teachers and school administration to ensure that equitable opportunities and access to facilities are available to children from minorities.

We should ask following questions to assess the prevailing situation in our schools:

- Do minority students have equal access to health facilities in our school?
- Is the school admission process fair and impartial?
- Are they treated equally in classrooms?
- Are they allowed to take part in co-curricular activities?
- Does the school administration take into consideration their religious concerns for instance, religious holidays and festivals etc?

Teachers and heads of learning institutions have moral obligation to protect the sensitivities of these children. Being minority, they should be treated fairly in school admissions, education, health and emergency matters. It is the collective responsibility of all teachers to prevent any such treatment in classrooms and schools that makes them feel discriminated and marginalized.

1.5 Education & Health of Refugee Children

Pakistan has hosted roughly 3.5 to 4 million Afghan refugees between 1979 and 2011. According to certain estimates, 2 Million of these refugees still reside in Pakistan despite several voluntary, incentive-driven repatriation programs. Although the Government of Pakistan wishes to send them back as soon as possible, following impediments hinder their return:

- Poor law and order situation in their home country
- Uncertain political conditions and the resultant instability
- Lack of basic facilities for instance, food, shelter, water etc.
- Lack of livelihood opportunities for sustained living
- Lack of health and educational institutions

Till repatriation, the Commission for Settlement of Refugees is mandated to take care of their health and education. The assistance includes provision of educational services, access to clean water, and creation of dispensaries for health and emergencies etc.

Measures for Safeguarding the Health and Education of Refugee Children

Following steps are required for ensuring better health and education of Afghan refugee children:

- Facilitating these children in school admission processes
- Regular medical checkup for safeguarding their health
- Respecting and addressing their culture and customs
- Showing no discrimination and prejudice in day-to-day activities

Story of Rabia

This is the story of a small refugee girl, who despite all the constraints in her life, was able to learn to read, write and transform her life. It also portrays the determination of a teacher who helped converting the girl's dream into reality, by her relentless attention, compassion and love.

Rabia is the girl's name who lives in a small village near Chaman, mostly inhabited by Afghan refugees. Due to unavailability of livelihood opportunities, men, women and children all work together to earn their living. Rabia, like the rest of the refugee children in the village, helps her family by fetching discarded papers and empty bottles from nearby places. At the end of the day, she gives it to her father who sells these items to earn bread and butter for his family. This is the cycle of life there, in which children grow older without any chance of realizing their aspirations, of being educated and becoming capable citizens.

But one fine morning, fortune favored Rabia; her innocence and love for education was about to change her life forever. In her usual routine, while she was looking around for used items, she got a glimpse of school where girls of her own age were studying. She climbed up some bricks to reach over a small wall, from where she started looking at these kids as if she was also among them, playing, learning and drawing. Ms Rahat, one of the older teachers in that school was sitting in the courtyard. Spotting the little girl peeking through the school's wall, the teacher gestured her to come inside. Rabia was surprised at first and thought of running away, but her curiosity stopped her and she slowly walked in. This was the first time in her life that she ever stepped inside a school building. Rabia's excitement was filled with nervousness and unknown fear, and the teacher could clearly see her anxiety. So she gently inquired her if she also wanted to study like the rest of children. Rabia was stunned; this was the question that nobody ever asked her, although she always so craved for it. The little girl immediately nodded affirmatively. The teacher then inquired about her parents and came to know that she belonged to an extremely impoverished family.

But it was the shine in her eyes, filled with spirit and enthusiasm that caught Ms Rahat's attention. She instantly decided to take care of the child's education herself. Knowing well that Rabia cannot afford to quit her work, the teacher devised a flexible schedule, during which she could come to school, take lessons and leave for her routine fetching work. She also provided the poor girl with necessary stationary, notebooks and a bag.

Rabia vehemently kept the teacher's words and regularly started attending the school. Despite all the day's work and lesser class time, she learnt to read, write and excel in her class. Ms Rahat was deeply impressed by the little girl's devotion, and she reciprocated by giving her utmost attention and love. Although Rabia's parents were aware of her studies but seeing her keenness, they never tried to stop their daughter from pursuing her dream.

Today, after years of hard work, Rabia has crossed multiple classes. She can now read, write, and speak confidently on various subjects, a peculiarity among her Afghan refugee peers, and occasionally helps her father in paper work. Today, whenever the teacher asks Rabia what she would like to become in future, she fervently replies, "I would become a teacher and help educate children in my community".

Certainly, the vision and determination of a devoted teacher can change the life of any child. The story also tells us that if given proper attention, care and guidance, every child has the capability to learn irrespective of the background.

2. HEALTHY LIFE STYLE

Adhering to following guidelines can ameliorate the delights of our life:

- Taking utmost care of our health in all circumstances
- Avoid eating and drinking of things with potentially harmful effects
- Living an upright, honest and active life

Healthy bodies possess healthy minds. Teachers therefore not only have the obligation to impart academic knowledge, they are required to teach their students the principles of healthy lifestyle. Only the children with true physical and mental fitness excel to become productive citizens. The interpretation of such healthy living-code is given below:

2.1 Personal Hygiene

Health care is a salient pillar of our lives. Basic principles of hygiene, cleanliness and fitness should form the basis of our day-to-day activities such as, taking regular showers, thoroughly washing hands after using toilets, brushing teeth before and after eating etc. Washing items of everyday use like, towel, handkerchief, and bed sheet etc. on regular basis. Likewise clothes and under-garments must be laundered regularly.

2.2 Eating Habits

Good health is dependent on good nutrition. Building wholesome eating habits from the childhood bears extreme importance, as they develop into healthy lifestyle in adulthood and old age. Apart from parents, teachers also bear responsibility in educating children the importance of healthy eating and drinking. Students must be refrained from consuming food and drinks that are contaminated, expired or exposed to dust, dirt, flies etc. Also in the age of proliferating junk food, inactivity and growing obesity, our teenagers need to be educated about the side effects of overeating and indolence.

2.3 Balanced Diet

Balanced Diet constitutes all the nutritional elements needed for body's growth such as Carbohydrates, Fats, Vitamins, Proteins and Minerals. The intake of balanced diet is imperative for good health and development, as it keeps the human body physically fit and resistant to diseases. It helps nurture physical, mental and emotional abilities, and makes the person perform its duties with efficiency and devotion.



2.4 Protection from Severe Weather

Human body needs to be protected from severe hot and cold temperature, as it directly puts strain on human immune system and weakens it. Teachers should incessantly advise their students to protect themselves from such extreme exposures by:

- Avoiding scorching sun light, unless by covering head and face
- Consuming more water and liquids during peak summers
- Wearing warm clothes during winters
- Eating dry fruits in cold weather
- Avoiding unnecessary outing during peak summers or winters



3. SPORTS AND PHYSICAL FITNESS

No one can deny the importance of physical fitness for good health. As mentioned before, teaching principles of health care in early childhood makes children establish good habits in their adult and old age. They are able to form such lifestyle (good food, healthy exercises) that lessens the incidence of ailments from conditions like obesity (Diabetes, Hypertension, Arthritis etc), and epidemics (AIDS, Polio, Seizure, Diphtheria, Pertussis / whooping cough etc).



Just as children are taught reading, writing and other skills in schools, they should also be taught the importance of physical fitness. Physically fit and active children exhibit more stamina, audacity and resilience, whereas, weak children show stubbornness and lack of confidence that renders them unsuccessful in practical life. Therefore, physical exercises and challenging sports, backed by good nutrition instills in children a fighting spirit. Notwithstanding, various surveys have shown that physical fitness and health care is given less or no importance at all in our educational institutions. Some of the causes for this lack of focus are given below:

- Lack of sports ground and related facilities
- Unavailability of public funds to promote sports at school level
- Insufficient attention on physical health in school curriculum
- Un-attentiveness of parents towards their children's physical fitness
- A child's growing interest in other form of inactive activities for instance, video games, television, cartoon, mobile phones, internet etc.

3.1 Role of School to Promote Healthy Lifestyle among Students

Following measures could be taken to improve children's health:

- Discrete lessons need to be included in school's curriculum that raises awareness about healthy lifestyle, including stories, living examples and illustrations to stimulate inspiration among children
- An assessment mechanism should be introduced at school level, with monthly reports submitted to select committees detailing the status of sports, physical fitness and health-related activities in school
- School's timetable must feature regular periods for sports and physical exercises
- Consultation with teachers, parents and student bodies should be a frequent affair, so that their recommendations could be included into the school's action plans

We also need to establish a culture of community engagement at grassroots level, to garner financial support for those schools lacking sports infrastructure and health programs.

4. POPULATION EDUCATION & HEALTH

Community Education refers to program that involves analysis of extended families and population at micro and macro level. It devises frameworks that allow students to examine existing population trends, and characteristics of family structures. On the basis of these progressions, students are able to identify the causes of population growth and its correlation to socio-economic shifts. This knowledge improves their understanding of the factors impacting societies, and helps them make informed decisions about their family, community and country.

Community Education has following important aspects:

- It examines current situation and the future trajectory of country's population
- Helps analyze reasons behind population change
- Interprets the effect of population growth rate vis a vis country's resources
- Investigates the socio-economic impact of growing population
- Defines the role of concerned people and institutions in tackling issues related to population

In recent decades Pakistan has experienced tremendous growth in its population. It is now the sixth most populated country in the world. However, in economic terms its per-capita income has remained far below even the Asian average. Following are the challenges that Pakistan faces due to this population explosion:

- Country's natural resources are depleting fast, increasing the prospects of resource-crisis
- Per-Acre crop yield is on decline, which might lead to regular food shortages
- Growing population is accelerating water, air and land pollution
- Diminishing livelihood opportunities is flaring up crime rate, thus collapsing our collective social behavior
- Policy planning is failing to show any results
- Due to rising socio-economic challenges, pessimism and depression is on the climbing, especially among youths
- Non-availability of resources is deteriorating health and living standards
- Net effect is the rise in poverty and corruption

Even in classrooms the growing number of students is producing discipline problems, and hurting their grades. Parents and teachers alike are responsible for educating these children on population emergency, and the role they are destined to play to correct this course. They must determine the size of their families according to resources, and help establish a society based on balance, rationale and respect.

Population Growth and Reproductive Health

Sex and gender are misunderstood terms, often mixed together despite clear differences. Sex implies the biological variance between male and female bodies, different anatomy of their reproductive organs, chemical composition and contrastive genetic makeup; whereas, Gender refers to social responsibilities of men and women that a society apportions to them. These roles are determined by the society's religious, social, cultural values, and are upheld by its people. A balanced society is the one that is appropriately educated in sex and gender, are aware of their roles and limitations, and knows how to strike right balance within the confines of their societal value system.

In Pakistani society, male is generally considered the head of family, whereas, the role of female is confined to raising children and taking care of household. Looking at the centrality of woman's role in family structure it is pertinent that they should be given due importance in health and education.

Government High School Mirpurkhas

Riaz Ahmed, teaches in Government High School Mirpurkhas. His story illustrates the drastic decline in Pakistan's educational system, due to growing disparity between population growth and the education budgets. It is interesting to hear Riaz who says that; when he started his teaching career several years ago, his school's environment was much cleaner and healthier. The teachers then were better able to manage and teach their students well, as the strength of students never crossed forty. Such an environment was conducive for him and his fellow teachers, who knew their pupil on individual basis. Such a bond allowed teachers to build upon their student's strengths, and rectify their weaknesses. But today the situation has grown much worse

Riaz says that the number of students has virtually doubled in each classroom, whereas, facilities remain the same. Space has so squeezed that each child now shares his/her chair and desk with the other. Physical constraining has not only deteriorated the decorum of the classrooms, but has also crippled the students' ability to concentrate and learn. He admits that the teachers today spend most of their time maintaining discipline, which renders them unable to teach. It is the overcrowding and hectic schedules that has virtually broken down the student-teacher relationship, and made them strangers to each other. But it is not only the teachers who suffer, the real victim are the children, who have their education, health and future at stake.

Teachers share this heightened anxiety across the board. There is growing consensus that the deteriorating strain on existing infrastructure has already reached an alarming level, and if necessary steps are not taken, the whole system might collapse in not so distant future.

Illiteracy and social inequality, on the other hand, raises the following issues for them and their family:

- High mortality rate due to ignorance (among women and children)
- High frequency in childbirth
- Under-age marriages raising the risk of pregnancy complications
- Disparity in nutrition, causing under-nourishment for mother and child

It is important that we help girls in our families by taking the following measures:

- Giving them proper food and adequate care without any gender prejudice

- Allowing girls to be married only after reaching minimum permitted age
- Providing regular medical counseling to keep them abreast of birth related challenges

Mother's health greatly influences child's fitness and personality in her womb. Under-age marriages often create complications during the woman's first pregnancy, and poses substantial risk to both child and the mother. Successive pregnancies and childbirths without adequate breaks are extremely detrimental to female health, as it causes various complexities such as; nervous weakness, acute blood deficiency etc. Children who are born in complicated pregnancies are weak by birth. They generally do not assume full scale of responsibilities as adults, due to inherent weaknesses. Thus taking care of woman does not just make a child healthy, it ensures the wellness of entire generation.

5. EPIDEMIC DISEASES AND HEALTH OF CHILDREN

School acts as a social institution that teaches children the true value of health, wellbeing and good lifestyle. Here the students must learn about potential health risks arising out of infections, epidemics and outbreaks. They should be able to identify the source of these diseases as mentioned below:

- Germ carrier insects, e.g., flies, mosquitoes, etc.
- Air suspended viral particles
- Infected and polluted water/food
- Contaminated objects, unclean classrooms, etc.
- Infected children, making physical contact with others



Flies and mosquitoes spread epidemic diseases. They live on filthy places (garbage, animal dung, sewage etc.) from where germs like virus and bacteria stick to their appendages and wings. These germs get into our food through their contact. Flies sometimes lay their eggs on edible items, where subsequent reproduction increases the chances of pandemic. Mosquitoes transmit certain germs from one person or place to the other, and are responsible for various illnesses for instance, Malaria, Dengue, Fever, etc.

Some other epidemics are caused by air suspended germs such as Flue, Polio, Pertussis / Whooping Cough, Tuberculosis, Measles, Diphtheria etc. An infected person spread these germs into air by sneezing, coughing or even speaking. Some diseases are also spread by eating contaminated, fungus-infested food for instance, Diarrhea, Lose Motions, etc.

A. Malaria

Malaria is a primeval disease. Dr Lavern was the first to discover malarial germ. Further research by Dr Ross revealed that the bite of female mosquito (Anopheles) is the cause of Malarial spread to humans. It causes the person to feel extreme cold, and causes fever.

Symptoms of Malaria:

Symptoms of this disease include: shivering, high temperature (fever), vomiting, weakening of immune system, lack of hunger, decrease of Red Blood Cells in the blood.



Preventive measures against Malaria:

- Fumigation (spray) should be administered in schools, homes, streets, neighborhoods to kill mosquitoes and their sanctuaries
- Keep the streets, schools, sewers and public places neat
- Avoid trash accumulation inside the house, and arrange for its disposal away from population areas

- Use mosquito net and repellent oils

B. Diarrhea

This disease is caused by viral or bacterial attack on human intestine. Symptoms include high grade fever, vomiting, headache, stomach pain, etc. and the cycle lasts for 1 to 10 days.

Preventive measures:

- Children should be kept away from direct contact of the patients as to minimize the spread
- Thoroughly wash hands after eating, touching animals or using toilet etc.
- Consume more water and milk
- Consume only properly cooked food
- Use fresh fruit and filtered water
- Nimkol (ORS) must be used by the patient to make up for body's mineral loss and especially for rehydration purpose



D. Dengue Fever

Mosquitoes having black stripes carries Dengue virus. It lives on clean water where it hatches eggs and reproduces. Like the Malarial virus it also gets transferred into healthy body by the mosquito bite, infecting the person within 3 to 15 days. During this period the patient suffers from swollen neck muscles, extreme cold, severe pain on back of head, soreness in body joints and legs, bloodshot, swelling in palm and foot base, pain while turning the eyeballs, and even traces of blood in vomit.

Precautionary measures/Protective actions for the patients:

- Conduct blood tests immediately, followed by proper treatment
- Keep away from healthy people, especially children to minimize the spread
- Dry up puddles of water in and around the house
- Use mosquito repellent sprays
- Special care must be taken in morning and evening, by closing doors and windows
- Fresh Pomegranate and Apple juice is consumed to bolster the immune system



E. Chicken Pox

Chicken Pox spreads through virus (Varicella Zoster) by the contact of infected person. It also gets into healthy body through suspended viral particles, saliva of patient and its body fluids.

Symptoms:

- Inflammation spots/red pimples appear on different parts of the body (armpit, back, legs, face etc). Suppuration fills them and causes severe itching
- High grade fever grips the patient



Protective measures for the patients:

- Keep away from healthy people until all the blisters and red spots dry up. In schools, the infected child should be sent on sick leave so that other students do not get contact infection
- Saliva or sputum must be disposed of properly in covered bins
- Keep the items-in-use away from healthy people such as, utensils, food, clothes etc.
- Cover the mouth while coughing and sneezing to minimize the spread of virus into air
- Always keep hands and mouth cleaned (wash with soap or sterile liquids)
- If any pimple gets filled with pus, it must be cleaned with Dettol or other antiseptic medicine
- Keep the doctor in loop for regular consultation
- Avoid use of Aspirin

F. Flu

This disease is caused by virus that affects the breathing track, throat, nose and lungs of the victim.

Symptoms:

Some of the symptoms include runny nose, watered eyes, sneezing, coughing, pain in parts of body, cold, high-grade fever, sore throat and difficulty in breathing.



Precautionary measures for patients:

- Saliva or sputum must be disposed of properly in covered bins
- Keep the items-in-use away from healthy people for instance, utensils, food, clothes etc.
- Cover the mouth while coughing and sneezing to minimize the spread of virus in air
- Always keep the hands and mouth cleaned (washed with soap or sterile liquids)
- Avoid use of Aspirin

G. Measles

Fluids discharged from the patient's body (saliva, sputum) causes Measles spread. Sneezing and coughing by infected person makes this virus air borne, and thus becomes infectious for people around.

Symptoms:

Symptoms of Measles include coughing, runny eyes and nose, high grade fever (103 to 105 degree Celsius), red blisters/pimples on head and mouth that spread throughout the body within three days.

Preventive measures for the patients:

- Keep away from other people to check the spread
- Take plenty of rest, and consume light, easily digestible food
- Keep the items-in-use away from healthy people to avoid contact
- Saliva or sputum must be disposed of properly in covered bins
- Keep hands and mouth neat and clean

H. Mumps

This virus spreads through the saliva of infected person.

Symptoms:

Its symptoms include throat swelling, pain in throat and jaw, high grade fever, headache, breathing problem, stiffness in neck etc.



Preventive measures for the patients:

- Keep away from uninfected people, especially children due to their increased susceptibility
- Vaccination shots should be administered immediately
- Keep the items-in-use away from healthy people
- Mouth and nose should be kept clean and covered

I. Tetanus

It is a bacterial disease that gets into body through cuts and injuries. It reproduces in open wounds and generates pus. Tetanus destroys the body's immune system and makes the victim susceptible to other diseases.

Symptoms:

Symptoms of this disease include stiffness in neck, lockjaw, and complication in swallowing. Anti-Tetanus vaccination and bandage should immediately be administered to check its spread.

6. EYE INFECTIONS AND THEIR CURE

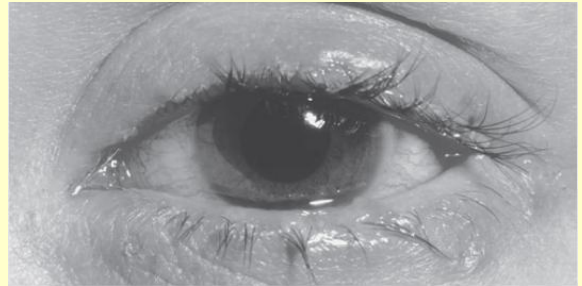
These infections occur by the contact of injurious particles or germs with the eye (bacteria, fungus, virus etc). It infects Cornea, the outer eye membrane and eyelid, and weakens the eyesight.

Types of Infections:

Eye infections have the following types:

a. Conjunctivitis

Its germs enter the eyes through touch or contaminated air. Symptoms of Conjunctivitis include severe itching, inflammation, reddening of one or both eyes, and suppuration.



Preventive measures for patients:

- Wash hands with soap or antiseptic liquids before and after touching infected eyes
- Keep all the contact items away from uninfected people such as, towel, handkerchief, and pillow covers etc.
- Use anti-bacterial, sterile drops to cleanse the eye
- Wear dark glasses to stop its spread through air

b. Blepharitis

This is a bacterial infection that causes inflammation of eyelids. Its bacteria grow on eyelids and causes allergy.

Symptoms:

Following are the symptoms of this disease;

- Reddening of eyeballs
- Severe itching and eye sore
- Feeling of sand particle floating in eyelid
- Loss of eyelashes

Cure:

Rub both the eyelids with clean hands until oil fats excrete from its membrane. Anti-bacterial drops are used to check the growth of infection.

c. Eye Wash

Method 1: Put your face into bowl of water. Turn and blink the infected eye to cleanse it of bacteria.

Method 2: Pour one liter of boiled water into bowl with one tablespoon of salt. Dip tissue paper or towel and steadily rub it over the infected eye.

Precautions for Method 2:

- Temperature of water should be mild enough not to harm eyes
- Do not pour too much salt in water, as it may harm internal cells of eye and increase the pain

d. Low Vision

Among many complications of eyes, Near Sightedness and Long Sightedness are the most common. It happens because of the weakness in eye muscles. Near Sightedness occurs when Iris elongates, and the lens begins to focus images in front of Retina; whereas, Long Sightedness is due to unusual contraction in Iris that renders the image of near-objects behind the Retina.

7. MICRO NUTRIENTS AND HEALTH OF CHILDREN

Balanced Diet is necessary for proper growth and better functioning of human body. It constitutes all the essential nutrients that help to maintain good health and strengthen the immune system. Inadequate proportion of crucial nutrients in a person's diet could lead to various complications such as weight loss, lack of appetite, sleeplessness, tooth decay, eye sight weaknesses etc. It is necessary for a person to keep on altering the variety of its intake so that the body does not become deficient in essential nutritional elements. Balanced diet is especially crucial for school-going children, as it helps them maintain the required calories, necessary for their physical and mental activities.



We should know that:

Balanced Diet constitutes Proteins, Carbohydrates, Fats, Vitamins and Minerals.

- Deficiency of Protein puts an adverse effect on child's health; it may even lead to Kwashiorkor disease. Likewise Carbohydrates and Fats are also very important for growth, if consumed within fair limits. Excess of Fats leads to obesity and various life threatening heart diseases. Intake of Vitamins helps in proper functioning of the digestive system, and strengthening of bones etc.
- Vitamin A lies in fruits and green vegetables like, spinach, cabbage, asparagus etc. It sharpens the eyesight, makes bones and teeth strong, and keeps the skin healthy. Deficiency of this Vitamin may cause night blindness.
- Vitamin B lies in egg, liver, milk and pulses etc. It helps in strengthening the human brain and sensory nerves. Deficiency of Vitamin B causes Beri Beri disease, which paralyzes limbs and weakens the digestive system.
- Vitamin C is found in citrus fruits like lemon, orange, pineapple etc. It keeps gums and teeth healthy, and strengthens the immune system. Its deficiency causes Scurvy disease.
- Vitamin D is present in fish oil, egg yolk, butter etc and helps teeth and bones grow stronger.
- Vitamin E lies in mineral oil, salad, egg yolk and milk etc.
- Vitamin K is present in spinach and cabbage leaves, and is critical for blood clotting mechanism.
- Minerals such as Calcium, Phosphorous, Iron, Iodine etc. are vital for proper body functioning. Phosphorous and Calcium is present in milk, egg and meat etc. and provide nourishment to teeth and bones. Iron is found in meat, vegetables, fruits, egg, fish and liver etc. and gives oxygen to the body. Iron is a critical component of Hemoglobin and produces blood namely Red Blood Cells. Deficiency of Iodine causes Goiter disease that hampers the child's height.

8. DE-WORMING

Health and wellbeing of students can only be ensured by safe and hygienic environment. To eliminate potential health-risks in and around schools, following measures should be taken:

- Administer fumigation (spray) in school's vicinity on regular basis. It minimizes the risk of disease spread by killing mosquito larva and germs in their hatching
- Students are instructed to avoid litter, keep their hands clean, not to walk bare-footed and keep their environment clean
- They should also be advised to eat healthy and packed food, and drink only clean water
- Sewage system of the school needs to be cemented and covered
- Disposal of garbage has to be way from school

9. FIRST AID

Life is full of accidents. Sometimes even minor injuries worsen to become life threatening, because of the lack of knowledge in First Aid. Thus students and teachers must know the basics of First Aid in order to deal with any emergency situation.

In case of an accident First Aid provides the first line of rescue, before the patient could get to doctor or hospital. Following are the types of accidents in which First Aid can prove helpful:

- Bruises or broken bones
- Electric shock
- Twisted ankle, wrist etc.
- Fire burns
- Drowning
- Heat stroke etc.

Any individual with little effort can learn the basics of First Aid, as it can prove helpful in lessening the pain and infection during accidents. Every school must have a First Aid Box equipped with following items:

Cotton, bandage, iodine solution, wound ointment, boric acid, pain killer tablets or cream, scissor, small wooden planks, etc.

Schools should also administer First Aid training sessions for students and teachers alike, which include staged scenarios and basic medicinal education. Following are some of the techniques to cope with different emergencies:

- In case of broken bone, the fractured portion is slowly placed at its original position. Place a straight wooden plank above and below the snapped area, and tie it with piece of cloth to make the fractured part unmovable and stable
- In case of bleeding, stop it by placing and pressing the finger on wound. If the cut is larger, then strap the main artery coming out of heart. Hold the bleeding part high enough to ease the pressure on blood flow
- If the wound is smaller then clean the bruised area with Dettol or cotton pad, and apply bandage
- If someone gets drowned and becomes unconscious, lay down that person straight and put a pillow underneath its abdomen area. Place your hand on lower part of the victim's breastbone and with quick strikes, hit the breastbone continuously until breathing starts
- In case of person on fire, immediately put blanket or thick clothe on burning area, and never use water. Afterwards, cut the fabric and separate it from wounds. Apply ointment on these burns
- If the person gets an electric shock, immediately cut the power supply (switch off). Detach the victim and pull it away from electric source by dry wooden stick, or wearing rubber gloves and dry shoes
- If snake or some other venomous animal bites a person, tightly tie up the bitten area with cloth or rope 5 or 6 inch above the wound. Likewise 5 or 6 inches further up, strap another area to block off the spread of venom in rest of body

All these measures are only the first line of aid and rescue. Patient should immediately be taken to doctor or hospital for full treatment.

Let us think together!

1. Do we keep the overall environment of our school/classroom neat and clean?
2. Is the environment of our school/classroom conducive for inclusive education?
3. Are we cautious of our student's health?
4. Are we aware of the symptoms of contagious diseases?
5. Are we aware of the precautionary and preventive measures against epidemic diseases?
6. Do we educate our students on population?
7. Do we protect the rights of minority students?
8. Do we educate our students on environmental protection and pollution?
9. Do we provide sufficient opportunities to students in physical fitness?
10. Do we unreservedly give school admissions to refugee and migrant children?
11. Do we discriminate children on the basis of faith, color, race, language, gender or ideology?
12. Do we teach our students to respect the others right?
13. Do we give equal importance to the health of boys and girls?
14. Do we provide equal opportunities to male and female students in sports and other co-curricular activities?
15. Do we give school admissions to handicapped or unprivileged children?
16. Do we help unprivileged students in admissions and studies?
17. Do we take care of the sensitivities of minority students while teaching religious subjects?
18. Do we teach our students the basics of First Aid?
19. Does school provide clean drinking water to all the students?
20. Do school toilets remain neat and clean?
21. Are the classrooms spacious, well lit and ventilated?
22. Does school conduct medical examination of all the students (at least twice a year)?
23. Do all the students get impartial treatment?
24. Do teachers conduct cleanliness competition among students?
25. Does the school have First Aid facility to treat children in case of emergency?



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