

**Society for Agriculture Health Environment Literacy Innovations (SAHELI)  
Adolescent Girls' Group Federation (AGF)**

**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)**

**1. Introduction**

Enhanced Life Skills among Adolescents in Mayurbhanj District is a new project being implemented by SAHELI in partnership with the Azim Premji Foundation (APF), Bangalore. As the title of the project states, the purpose of this project is the overall and inclusive empowerment of the adolescent population. The project envisages the adolescent population to take a leading role in this empowerment process. Hence, it is a self-driven process.

**2. Context**

The project initiated with the overall idea of collectivising adolescent girls to address issues of early marriage, school dropout, health and nutrition, gender-based discrimination, etc., and build a cadre of peer leaders to anchor basic group processes in sixteen villages across 2 GPs of Rasgovindpur block, Mayurbhanj district, Odisha has the following specific objectives.

1. Capacity building of Adolescent girls regarding their Child right, Gender right and life skill for enhancing their knowledge and skills.
2. Developed skills of adolescent girls to express their voices at mainstream institutions of school, colleges, govt official and Panchayat to address their issues.
3. Collectivization of adolescent girls in form three institution where they can raise, discuss, and address their issues related to child right, gender right and life skill through sensitizing the PRI members, panchayat, and School & college institution.

The project has identified 16 immediate results or outputs to achieve the above objectives. These are given in the project result matrix. Ultimately, the project is expected to reach at the results (outcomes) as given below by travelling through the outputs given in the project result matrix.

- 750 adolescent girls will be collectivized and trained into 48 Adolescent groups. These girls will demonstrate increased knowledge regarding gender rights, child rights, and health & nutrition.
- 50 peer leaders will be trained such that they can anchor basic group activities such as mobilizing for meeting, coordinating events, assisting staff in facilitation, maintaining minutes, etc.
- Adolescent girls will be organized into block-level federations where they can raise, discuss, and address problems and concerns by influencing stakeholders such as PRI members, educational institutions, and government departments.
- All eligible adolescent girls and family members will have improved access to welfare schemes and services. Enrolment of students at residential govt schools set up by Govt.

The third and the fourth outcomes are important and hierarchically at higher level. Once the basic activities like formation of AGG and training are concluded and other activities for the empowerment of adolescent groups are going on, the important vehicle for their empowerment, i.e., their federations must be formed and activated.

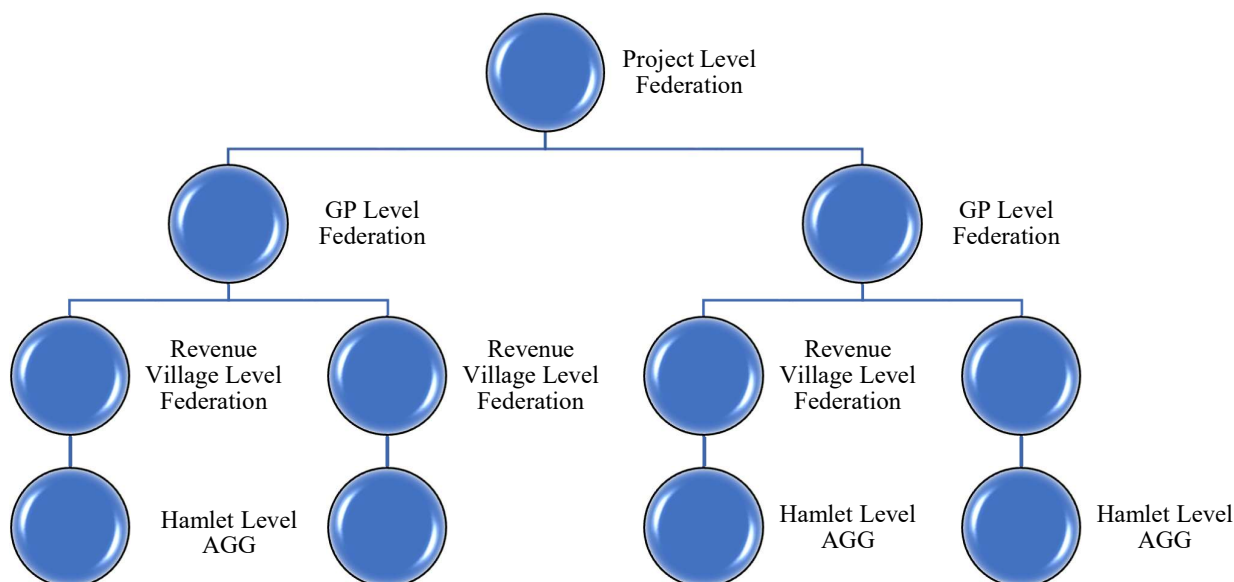
**3. Purpose**

The purpose of this SOP is to give guidance to this very important function of this project to create and make functional of higher tier of the collectives of adolescent girls. The regular functioning of these tiers of structure will help the project to carry out the major project activities such as (1) regular monthly meetings of adolescent group at village, (2) quarterly meeting of the federations of adolescent girls' groups, (3) annual workshop with all adolescent girls groups and peer leaders, (4) activating adolescent girls groups and peer leaders into action, and (5) directly addressing child marriage and GBV. In short, these structures are the key implementing organs of the project and the staff of the project is expected to provide proper guidance to the functioning of these structures or bodies.

#### 4. Structure

##### 4.1 Outline of the Structure

Presented below is the outline of the hierarchy of the federations.<sup>1</sup>



##### 4.2. Constituting these layers

The hamlet level AGGs constitute the lowest rung in the hierarchy of this structure. There is expected to have 48 to 50 such groups and each group will have upto 15 adolescent girls belonging to the respective hamlets as members of these AGGs. The proposed number of members in all these AGGs is 750<sup>2</sup>. All members of all AGGs (may be 3 to 4) in a revenue village constitute the second rung or tier.

From each hamlet level AGG 1 to 2 members or leaders shall be selected or identified or elected to constitute the GP level federation that is the middle or the second tier in this structure. One among them, it is preferable to be the Peer Leader of the village level AGG. The total number of the members of one GP level federation shall be in the range of 30 to 35<sup>3</sup>. It is desirous of converting the members of these groups as resource persons

<sup>1</sup> Please consider giving names in Odia to each structure at different levels in hierarchy.

<sup>2</sup> This number is as per our project contract and hence it cannot be compromised with.

<sup>3</sup> This number can vary to suit the real ground situation

for the field activities of the project, and therefore it is advised to hold the meeting of these members at GP level at least once in three months part from the other activities listed in the project.

From each GP level federation 5 to 6 members or leaders shall be identified or selected or elected to constitute the project level federation that is the third tier of this structure. They along with project staff under the leadership of the Project Coordinator shall act as the lead team of the project. The total number of this team shall be below 15. This team is expected to meet as an when required to implement the project activities. It is expected that this team will play a vital role in making the project driven by AGGs. Thus, the entire structure can become an important project instrument in the empowerment of adolescent groups.

#### *4.3. Lead teams*

It is advised to identify team leads at different levels, viz., hamlet level, revenue village level, GP level and project level which is already discussed above. This team leads must have 50 peer leaders and upto 50 another adolescent girls. This number can change. Keeping this number as flexible is keeping in view of the extension of the project activities after 2027.

#### *4.4. Internal Communication*

It is essential to have healthy communication across the tiers of this structure and between the project team lead on the one hand and between the project lead team and the SAHELI represented by the PMC on the other. This does not mean that the community leaders to be made as members of the PMC. However, the Project Coordinator is expected to keep the PMC and the Director informed of all the developments.

### 5. Functions

All tiers of this structure take active part in implementing the project activities. The Lead Team of the project level federation of the AGGs shall have the following functions to perform:

- Work closely with the project staff in guiding the AGGs
- Develop implementation plan along with the project staff for the empowerment process for adolescent girls
- Act as resource persons for the meetings of AGG
- Identify bottlenecks for empowerment
- Develop strategies to remove those bottlenecks
- Guide AGGs in identification of cases in child marriage and GBV
- Lead the process for resolving those cases
- Represent to the local governments the violation of the rights of women and girls
- Work together with the local governments to resolve such problems
- Address all the questions regarding the protection of the rights of women and girls

### 6. Mode of Operation

Some suggestions on mode of operation are given below. These may vary according to the specific situations.

#### *6.1. General Principles*

- (a) It is suggested to follow a transparent and democratic pattern of functioning for this structure to elevate the members and lead members of the structure to leadership position. All activities must be planned and organized in a manner that each member gets opportunity for discussion and airing her views.
- (b) The above proposed structure will keep the parents and other adults of its operation for securing their support. This will enhance the acceptance of the parents and other adults.

- (c) Wherever possible ensure association or collaboration or involvement of the functionaries of local government and of the frontline departments in the affairs of the federations. This is an important measure for sustainability.

### *6.2. Specific Suggestions*

- (1) AGG weekly meeting: Girls from each village will sit weekly one in common place and will be provided sessions on different life skill module on gender, child right etc. Also organise recreation activities, painting competition etc. Session will be done by peer leaders and field staff of the project. Consider giving prizes after competitions. These should be the platforms where the instance of right violation are discussed.
- (2) GP federation: Monthly or quarterly meetings to discuss their issues and prepared action plans. Besides, workshops shared by adolescents with the presence of service providers and stakeholders at Gram Panchayat level may be considered.
- (3) Annual experience sharing workshop among girls from each village may be organized.
- (4) Monthly or quarterly meetings of the project level lead team

### **7. Documents**

- Membership registers with details
- Minutes of meetings
- Notices and announcements
- Workshop proceedings
- Books of accounts
- Report of support extended to adolescent girls and their families