SAHAJ

(सम्मान, हक्क, जबाबदारी | Respect, Rights, Responsibilities)



Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) Curriculum

SAHAJ (Sanman, Hakka, Jababdari – Respect, Rights, Responsibility) is a comprehensive, spiral sexuality education curriculum for Grades 1–10. It is adapted from the Rights, Respect, Responsibility (3Rs) curriculum developed by Advocates for Youth (USA) and contextualized by PHG for the Indian educational landscape. Through age-appropriate content and participatory activities, SAHAJ helps learners understand themselves, navigate relationships, recognize and respond to challenging situations, and apply learning to everyday life.

सहज
सन्मान हक्क जबाबदारी

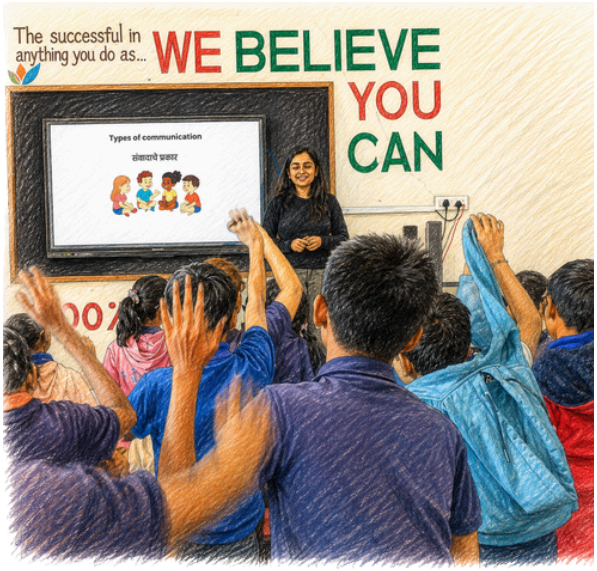
Prayas (Health Group)

Why CSE?

Every day, children and adolescents are trying to make sense of themselves and the world around them. As children grow, they naturally begin to ask questions about their bodies, friendships, emotions, attraction, relationships, and the changes they experience as they get older. Today, these questions arise even earlier as children navigate a world shaped by the internet, social media, and constant access to information, some accurate, much of it confusing.

Though parents are primary sexuality educators for children, schools play a vital role in not just nurturing academic learning, but also contribute significantly to children's overall growth and wellbeing. While there are strong efforts to make space in schools to teach subjects like mathematics, science, languages, and physical education, considered as essential for a child's development, conversations about growing up, safety, and sexuality are often left unanswered or avoided. Not because people do not recognize its importance, but because there is often significant discomfort, a perceived lack of confidence, knowledge, and skills to talk about sexuality, and limited access to structured curricula—leaving many unsure of where and how to begin.

Sexuality Education is a curriculum that not only provides knowledge and space to discuss changes happening in developmental years but also strengthens life skills such as self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, communication, decision-making, and problem-solving equips young people to navigate everyday challenges and opportunities. These skills not only support emotional wellbeing and positive relationships but also contribute to safer and more inclusive school environments. Children also navigate a range of social, emotional, and safety-related challenges.



The following data highlights some of the realities that many young people in India encounter today.

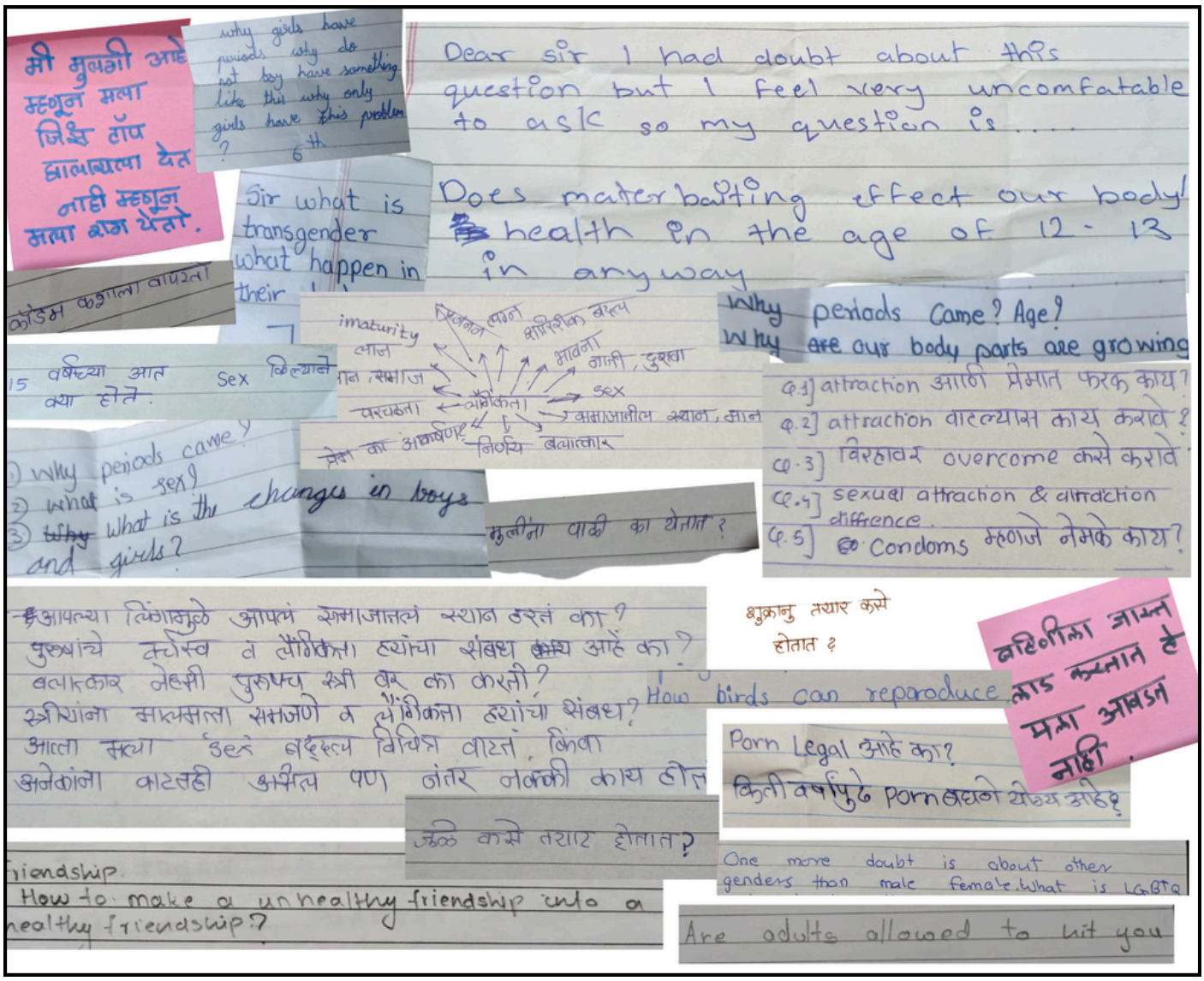
Studies indicate that 25.6% to 53% of adolescents in India have experienced some form of bullying, with verbal bullying being the most prevalent type, followed by physical and relational bullying.
Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a significant public health concern in India, with studies indicating alarming prevalence rates. According to one study, 53% of children in India are victims of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, with 70% of cases going unreported or unshared even with family members.
Adolescents in India are exposed to pornography and it may be having a significant impact on their development and sexuality. However, there is limited research and interventions to address the issue.





Voices from the Classroom

Across ages, geographies, and backgrounds, children and young people bring thoughtful and often complex questions and concerns about their lives and experiences. These questions highlight both their curiosity and the need for safe spaces where they can access accurate information, seek support, and engage in open dialogue.



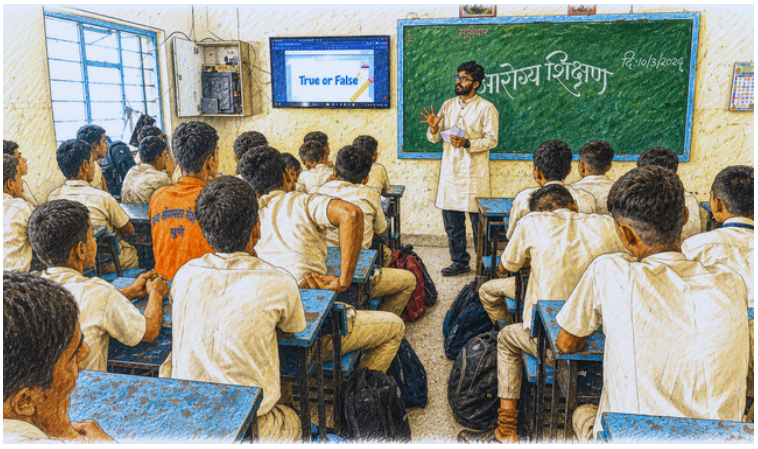
Building on this understanding and experience of working with adolescents for over two decades, Prayas Health Group (PHG), Pune has developed a comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) curriculum that aims to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to navigate their lives with confidence and responsibility.

What is SAHAJ?

SAHAJ (Sanman, Hakka, Jababdari – Respect, Rights, Responsibility) is a comprehensive, spiral sexuality education curriculum for Grades 1–10. This curriculum is informed by and aligned with the principles and learning objectives outlined in the ITGSE (The International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education) developed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in collaboration with several United Nations agencies, provides an evidence-based framework for delivering age-appropriate, scientifically accurate, and comprehensive sexuality education.

These are the eight key themes of the International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE).

- Relationships
- Values, Rights, Culture and Sexuality
- Understanding Gender
- Violence and Staying Safe
- Skills for Health and Well-being
- The Human Body and Development
- Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour
- Sexual and Reproductive Health





Core Components of SAHAJ -

While sexuality education programmes may differ across contexts, certain principles remain central to our approach. These principles shape what we teach, how we teach, and how we engage with children, young people, schools, and communities.

1. Affirmative - We approach sexuality as a natural part of human development. Rather than focusing solely on risks, we promote self-awareness, healthy relationships, wellbeing, and informed decision-making. This approach recognizes that young people are not only vulnerable to risks, but also capable of making thoughtful, responsible, and healthy choices when provided with the right support.

2. Rights based - Every child and young person has the right to information, dignity, safety, health, and equality. Our approach encourages learners to understand, exercise, and respect these rights.

3.Spiral & Incremental- Just as subjects like mathematics, science, or languages are taught with increasing depth as children grow, learning about sexuality also happens progressively. Concepts are revisited at different stages with age-relevant information, skills, and values, allowing learners to build on prior knowledge and experiences over time.

4. Age appropriate - Children and young people need different information and skills at different stages of development. While age provides a useful guide, our curriculum also responds to learners' contexts, experiences, and evolving realities. This ensures that learning is relevant, timely, and meaningful, meeting young people where they are.

5. Inclusion of the eco system - Sexuality education is most effective when it extends beyond the classroom. While young people remain at the centre of our work, we seek to engage teachers, parents, school staff, and community members to foster shared understanding and create supportive environments for learning and growth.

What will students learn?

The detailed grade-wise curriculum, including themes and lesson plans, can be accessed through the link below → **Link**

Enhancing Lessons with Audio-Visual Tools -

In addition to the curriculum, PHG has adapted 70 videos into **Marathi** and 35 videos into **Hindi** from Amaze.org. These videos complement curriculum sessions by making complex topics more engaging, accessible, and discussion-friendly for young people.

How do we implement SAHAJ Curriculum?

Prayas Health Group aims to build sustainable models of implementation within schools. In the initial phase, trained sexuality educators facilitate the SAHAJ curriculum sessions with students, while also engaging with teachers and, where possible, interested parents to build shared understanding and support.

Alongside classroom implementation in the first year, a parallel process of teacher orientation and capacity building is initiated. A small group of interested teachers is gradually trained, with the long-term vision that they will be able to independently facilitate SAHAJ sessions, with support from trained educators whenever required. This approach helps integrate SAHAJ into the school system, reducing dependency on external facilitators over time.

It is also important to recognise that while teachers regularly work with children, facilitating Comprehensive Sexuality Education requires additional preparation. It involves reflection on one's own beliefs, values, and comfort with the subject. Therefore, the process is best initiated by trained sexuality educators, after which teachers and school staff can gradually take it forward with appropriate support and handholding.

Stories of Change: SAHAJ in Schools

The SAHAJ curriculum has been implemented in diverse settings across Pune, Nashik, Phaltan, Kolhapur, Ahilyanagar. reaching learners in private schools, government schools, residential schools, and informal settlements with more than 4000 students, teachers and parents. Across these contexts, we have witnessed meaningful shifts in both learners and school communities. Children become more confident in asking questions and expressing themselves, while schools grow more comfortable embracing curiosity and dialogue. Conversations between children, parents, teachers, and peers become more open and constructive. We have also observed young people developing greater self-awareness, empathy, and a stronger sense of responsibility towards themselves and others.

The impact of the SAHAJ curriculum is best understood through the voices of those who experience it. These films below capture the journeys of two schools in rural and semi urban context, bringing to life the changes, challenges, and learnings that emerge through implementation.

Urja Gurukul School → Link



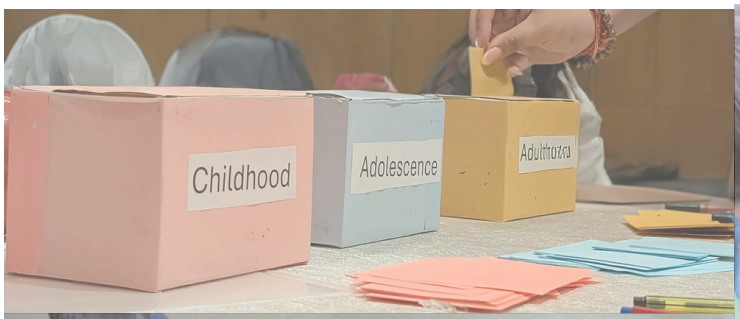


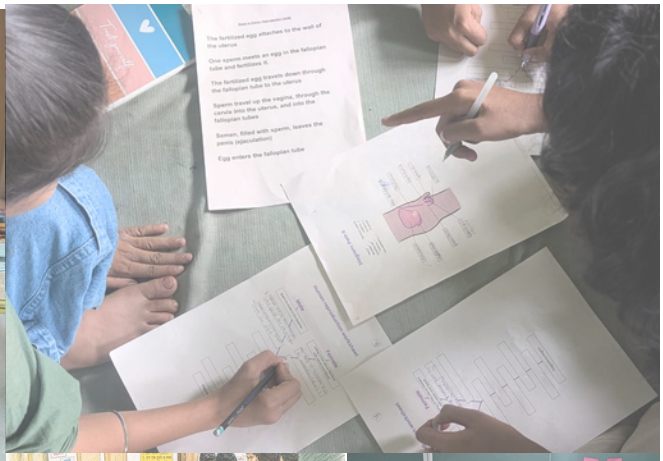
Link ← **KamlaBai Nimkar School**

Our vision is that every child in Maharashtra has access to education that supports the journey of growing up healthy. When young people are provided with knowledge, guidance, and safe spaces for dialogue, they can navigate life's changes with confidence, understand themselves better, and build relationships rooted in respect, empathy, and responsibility.

To know more about Prayas Health Group -

Website - health.prayaspune.org
YouTube - YouTube
Let's Talk Sexuality - Website



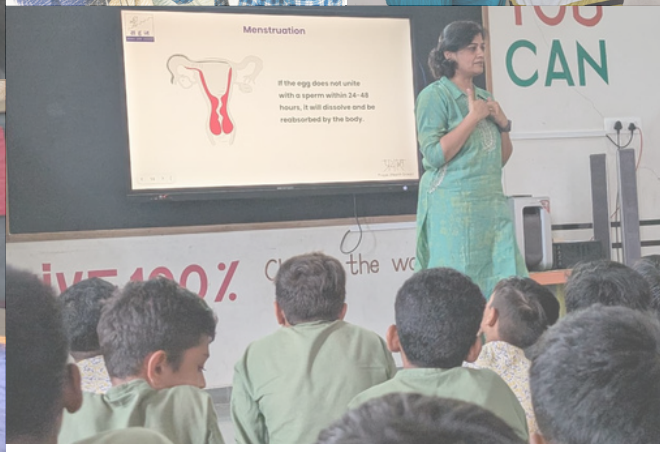












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