

Advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights of among adolescent women

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Abstract:

Adolescents account for one fifth of the world's population and in India they account for 22.8% of the population. It is estimated that there are almost 200 million adolescents in India between the age group of 15-24. Adolescence is a transition phase through which a child becomes an adult. It is the period during which rapid physical growth occurs. Psychological and psychosocial changes accompany with the development of secondary sexual characteristics and reproductive maturation. There is a lack of knowledge and awareness among adolescents about health issues and problems. An Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) study showed that knowledge and awareness about puberty, menstruation, physical changes in the body, reproduction, contraception, pregnancy, child bearing reproductive tract infections, sexually transmitted infections (STIS) and HIV was low among boys and girls, especially in younger adolescents (10-14). Among the younger adolescents, 40% had little knowledge about the sex organs and most girls had not been informed about menarche prior to its onset. India's National Population Policy 2000 aims at ensuring adolescents need for accessible and affordable information, counseling, population education and contraceptive services. The population policy also emphasized that reproductive health services for adolescent girls and boys are needed in rural areas where adolescent marriage and pregnancy are most common. International agreement affirms that adolescents have a right to age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health information, education and services that enable them to deal in a positive and responsible way with their sexuality. The study has the following objective.

1. To assess the knowledge of adolescent girls regarding the reproductive health and human sexuality.
2. To assess the knowledge of adolescent girls regarding reproductive tract infections/sexually transmitted disease.
3. To assess the knowledge of adolescent girls regarding contraception.

Survey method and questionnaire method would be used in the study. The study covers 100 college students who are students in their teen age. The present paper deals with various strategies required for advancing the sexual and reproductive health of young women.