

CASE REPORTS

A CASE STUDY ON ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN RURAL WEST BENGAL: PROGRESS AND GAPS IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Kheyali Roy

Research Scholar, Department of Social Work, Visva-Bharati, West Bengal, India & Assistant Professor, Gopal Narayan Singh University, Bihar, India

Correspondence: Kheyali Roy, email: kheyaliroy9@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Background: A crucial part of humanitarian assistance is reproductive health (RH) care. High maternal mortality is a common problem for women and girls in rural areas, and they are more susceptible to unauthorized pregnancies, unsafe abortions, and sexual assault. This study examined the quality, accessibility, and availability of Reproductive Healthcare services in a few rural West Bengal districts. **Aim:** This study aims to investigate the progress and gaps in Reproductive Healthcare services in select rural regions of West Bengal. **Materials & Methods:** Case study design was used and carried out in Rural West Bengal, and an 18 years old adolescent girl was included. **Results and Conclusion:** Many healthcare providers lacked crucial information and abilities. Despite participants reporting a notable rise in the usage of facility-based delivery services, the case study also found little awareness of the range of Reproductive Healthcare services offered and socio-cultural hurdles to obtaining them. Reproductive Healthcare services are offered, although the accessibility of high-quality Reproductive Healthcare services varies between settings. To guarantee the consistent Availability of necessary supplies, commodity management, and security must be given top priority. To ensure that Reproductive Healthcare services are provided courteously and effectively, it is crucial to strengthen suppliers' attitudes, managerial skills, and technological capabilities. Emergency health professionals should meaningfully involve crisis-affected communities in Reproductive Healthcare programming and ensure the systematic execution of high-quality Reproductive Healthcare services to promote awareness and utilization of this life-saving care.

Keywords: Reproductive Healthcare Services, Rural, Adolescent Girls, Awareness.

INTRODUCTION

To protect adolescents from various sexual and reproductive health issues, they must use reproductive health services. As a result, before executing any interventions, the level of their service utilization should be assessed. Taking Adolescents' Bio-Physical and Psychological Changes into, every family should talk about issues relating to sexual and reproductive health. Schools can significantly enhance adolescents' knowledge, attitudes,

and exposure to Reproductive Healthcare services because most adolescents at this age spend most of their time in school. Therefore, the school administration should work to foster an environment that encourages adolescents to talk about their concerns and experiences with Reproductive Healthcare services. To achieve a successful outcome, Health Structure still needs to reform the current practice and establish new comprehensive free-standing or integrated

adolescent friendly-services with trained service providers conveniently. This is because adolescents' needs, which are dynamic, confidential, and flexible by nature, must be taken into account (Tlaye, K.G., Belete, M.A., Demelew, T.M. *et al.*2018). The fact that many health facilities offer certain Reproductive Healthcare services is encouraging. However, there is still an urgent need to address implementation gaps, particularly regarding safe abortion services, the standard of care, the use of Reproductive Healthcare services, and monitoring and evaluation. To satisfy the impacted populations' needs for health, minimum quality standards must be satisfied. However, simply increasing the Availability of Reproductive Healthcare services is insufficient. Providing Reproductive Healthcare services in humanitarian situations is hampered by management and knowledge gaps, as well as by the prejudices of specific providers. Reproductive Healthcare services will not improve in quality if only supplies are provided, even though these investments may be less tangible for funders and policymakers (Casey, S.E., Chynoweth, S.K., Cornier, N. *et al.* 2015). Access to and utilization of maternal and reproductive health care in India is influenced by factors such as economic status, gender, and social standing. When creating policies and programs to achieve equitable progress toward better maternal and reproductive health, consideration should be paid to how these socioeconomic determinants interact to produce and maintain inequity (Sanneving, L., Trygg, N., Saxena, D., Mavalankar, D., & Thomsen, S., 2013). Female adolescents and young adults should have regular counseling and screening to maintain awareness of any emerging diseases and develop effective control strategies for those that are already present (Mehra, D., Rajak, R., Deo, S., Najmuddin, Q., Devi, K. S., Rathi, S. K., & Mehra, S.2023).

Case Study Report

Adolescence is when a person wants to mature and learn about reproductive health and healthcare options, but they still have problems with their reproductive system and don't understand the hazards. Pessimistic consequences may persist throughout adulthood due to inadequate comprehension, a gloomy outlook, and disregarding needs linked to reproductive health. In her opinion, peer pressure, where young people typically learn about reproductive health and healthcare services from others or from information that is disseminated around them but may not be correct, is one of the critical reasons for these problems. She discovered that she had also made poor decisions due to a lack of accurate information, inadequate knowledge regarding reproductive health, or a lack of access to medical treatment, all of which could have further detrimental impacts. To lead healthy, satisfying lives and protect against issues with their reproductive systems, she must have a complete awareness of her growth and development and the physical and psychological changes that happen during puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth. It is impossible to emphasize the significance of reproductive health throughout childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. It establishes the framework for men's and women's health outside of the reproductive years and may significantly influence the health of the succeeding generation. Reproductive health is one of the most crucial facets of human growth and overall health. It represents health in childhood and is vital during adolescence and adulthood. As part of a thorough and holistic teaching curriculum, students should get the correct information to help them achieve healthy sexual and reproductive health and prevent adverse health outcomes. Reproductive health education must be a part of the curriculum since it could provide

students with a platform to advance their academic careers. Reproductive health education in school settings may be submitted with the support of information and attitudes regarding the topic. The case study assessed the adolescent's understanding and behavior regarding reproductive health in the area. Young people have varying ideas depending on their background or current location. Young people must express their concerns to their people. Influential people should promote a positive atmosphere. Adults should feel more at ease talking to young people about their questions and concerns regarding reproductive health and healthcare services where they feel safe. Providing adolescents with the tools they need to meet health standards in ways that protect equality, non-discrimination, privacy, and secrecy is part of upholding and respecting established human rights.

Gaps in Utilising Reproductive Healthcare Services

Healthcare related	Stigma related
Lack of awareness regarding services	Shyness and stigma
Non Availability of services	Cultural norms
Lack of privacy	Lack of awareness among the parents
Confidentiality	Lack of Communication

CONCLUSION

The current study found that reproductive healthcare services were underutilized in a rural West Bengal region. To increase the use of such services, a multi-pronged strategy is required. At the community level, awareness campaigns for promoting Adolescent-Friendly Health Clinics and community support initiatives might be organized. Parents/guardians need to be encouraged and counseled about the value of Reproductive Healthcare Services, focusing on empowering their daughters with the necessary information to end the stigmatizing cycle and any cultural taboos. The patient-provider relationship will improve if data privacy and

confidentiality are improved in healthcare facilities, increasing the use of the services. The regularisation of Reproductive Healthcare Services at Adolescent-Friendly Health Clinics that cater to teenagers should also be emphasized.

REFERENCES

Casey, S.E., Chynoweth, S.K., Cornier, N. *et al.* (2015). Progress and gaps in reproductive health services in three humanitarian settings: mixed-methods case studies. *Confl Health* 9 (Suppl 1), S3. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1752-1505-9-S1-S3>.

Mehra, D., Rajak, R., Deo, S., Najmuddin, Q., Devi, K. S., Rathi, S. K., & Mehra, S. (2023). Centers of Excellence for Adolescent Health and Development: A Case Study from Uttar Pradesh, India. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(4), 3042. MDPI AG. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20043042>.

Sanneving, L., Trygg, N., Saxena, D., Mavalankar, D., & Thomsen, S. (2013). Inequity in India: the case of maternal and reproductive health. *Global health action*, 6, 19145. <https://doi.org/10.3402/gha.v6i0.19145>.

Tlaye, K.G., Belete, M.A., Demelew, T.M. *et al.* (2018). Reproductive health services utilization and its associated factors among adolescents in Debre Berhan town, Central Ethiopia: a community-based cross-sectional study. *Reprod Health* 15, 217. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-018-0659-4>.

Conflict of interest: None

Role of funding source: None