

Knowledge on Reproductive Health issues among Adolescent Girls of Burla Town, Sambalpur, Odisha

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Abstract- Adolescence is the period in which foundations can be laid for a long and healthy life. It is a prime time for health promotion and for establishment of healthy behaviour that will influence health in later years. This transition phase makes them vulnerable to a number of problems, for example, psychosocial problems, general and reproductive health problems, and sexuality related problems. Hence the present study was conducted to assess the knowledge of adolescent girls regarding reproductive health. The study was conducted among the + 2 students of JotiVihar Junior College and N.A.C. College, Burla of Sambalpur district Odisha. The numbers of samples were 100. Purposive sampling method was used for data collection and self-formulated questionnaire was used to collect data from adolescent students to assess their level of knowledge on reproductive health issues. It consists of questions on background information, and reproductive health issues like menstruation/ menarche/ pubertal changes, teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortion, RTIs, STDs and HIV/AIDS. It was found that the girls had just average knowledge about Reproductive Health. This is a matter of great concern. Thus Reproductive health problems should be discussed among adolescents, especially for girls through health clubs, seminars, lectures, counselling and intervention programmes at school and college level.

Index Terms- Knowledge, Adolescent Girls, Reproductive Health, Abortion, Pregnancy.

health of future generation. A vast majority of adolescent girls in India are suffering from reproductive health morbidities (Agrawal S).

“Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. It also improves sexual health, the purpose of which is the enhancement of life and personal relation, and not merely counselling and care related to reproductive and sexually transmitted diseases” (WHO, 1996).

Reproductive health covers all aspects of adolescent health. It is an umbrella concept, consisting of several distinct, yet related issues such as abortion, child birth, sexuality, contraception and maternal mortality. Biological, social, cultural, economic and behavioural factors play an important role in determination of reproductive health (Sandana R 2002). Female young girls’ reproductive health is poorly understood and ill served in India. In this age group, girls are growing and have inadequate awareness of reproductive health mechanism. They are also not aware about how to maintain hygienic practices during menstruation. Moreover, reproductive tract infections (RTIs) are more prevalent in this age group. (Kamaljit K., et.al, 2012)

So the adolescent girls have proper knowledge on reproductive health. On this backdrop the study was conducted to assess the knowledge of adolescent girls of Burla town of Odisha on reproductive health.

I. INTRODUCTION

World Health Organisation (WHO) has defined adolescence as the age range of 10 – 19 years. It is the period between childhood and adulthood, marked by physical growth, attainment of a mature structure, the learning of physical characteristics, mental maturation and the development of secondary-sex characteristics.

Adolescents comprise 20% of the world’s total population. Out of 1.2 billion adolescents worldwide, about 85% live in developing countries. In India, there are 190 million adolescents comprising 21% of India’s total population. Adolescent girls constitute about 1/5th of total female population in the world. (Census 2001).

This transition phase makes them vulnerable to a number of problems for example, psychosocial problems, general and reproductive health problems, and sexuality related problems (Sharma, 2008). The period of adolescence for a girl is a period of physical and psychological preparation for safe motherhood. As direct reproducers for future generations, the health of adolescent girls influences not only their own health, but also the

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out socio- demographic status of parents of the respondents;
- To study the knowledge regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls.

III. METHODOLOGY

To assess the knowledge on Reproductive Health issues among adolescent girls of Burla town of Sambalpur district, Odisha was selected as the study area for data collection. In order to accomplish the objectives of the study, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were adopted. This helped in generating relevant data that answers the relevant research questions. The design of the study was descriptive. The present research described various aspects of adolescents’ reproductive health. The study described the status of reproductive health knowledge among the adolescent girls. Respondents were the + 2 students of JotiVihar junior college and N.A.C. College, Burla of

Sambalpur district Odisha. The numbers of samples were 100. Purposive sampling method was used for data collection. For the purpose of data collection self-formulated questionnaire were used to collect data from adolescent students to assess their level of knowledge on reproductive health issues. Structured questions on various components of reproductive health issues were included in it. It consists of questions on background information, and reproductive health issues.

Background information provides information on age, no. of brothers and sisters, family size, type of family, educational, occupational, and economical status of parents.

Reproductive health issues covered in the study

The following issues related to reproductive health of the adolescents were investigated in the study:

1. Process of growing up, sexual development: puberty, menstruation,
2. Pregnancy (Reproduction)
3. Abortion (Medical Termination of Pregnancy)
4. Contraceptives for birth control
5. Sexually transmitted infections (STIs): Basic facts about its causes and symptoms
6. HIV/AIDS: modes of transmission of HIV, ways to prevent HIV transmission, and myths about HIV transmission

The data obtained were compiled, stating the frequency of every response in each item and then statistical analysis were done by calculating the percentages of each frequency. Percentages were calculated to draw out differences in the responses and to highlight major responses. Tables, graphs, bar diagrams, and pie diagrams were prepared to provide a more appropriate interpretation of the processed data.

IV. RESULTS

This was a cross sectional study conducted in Burla town of Sambalpur district, Odisha among the adolescent girls with a view to assess the knowledge and about the selected reproductive health issues. A total of 100 adolescent girls were assessed using structured questionnaire.

Socio-Demographic characteristics

From the analysis of the data it was found that the respondents were between the age group of 15-18 years. 58% respondents were arts students and 42% respondents were science students. 44% of the respondents were belongs to nuclear family and 56% belongs to joint family. 10% of fathers were illiterate, 56% were studied up-to 12th. It was noted that 29% were graduate and a small percentage of fathers (5%) had qualification of post graduation. It also reflected that 21% of the mothers of the respondents were illiterate. 60% mothers of the respondents studied up-to 12th, 15% did graduation, and 4% were post-graduates. 87% Of the fathers were employed. They were engaged in different types of work like, some were in government service, some were in private service, and some were self employed. 13% fathers were unemployed. Among the mothers 84% were house-wives and 16% were employed. Analysis depicted that 48% of the respondents' had a monthly

family income between Rs.5000 -15000. 34% of the respondents had a monthly income between Rs. 15000 -25000. 9% respondents had monthly income in between Rs. 25000-35000 and 9% had Rs 35000-45000.

Knowledge on reproductive health

Analysis of the findings reflected that that a small (21%) percentage of students were fully aware, 34% of the respondents were partially aware on the physiological changes that occurs during the puberty period. It also depicted that most of the students were not aware (45%) at all. The science students were more aware than arts students about the physiological changes during the period. This can be seen from the figure no-1.

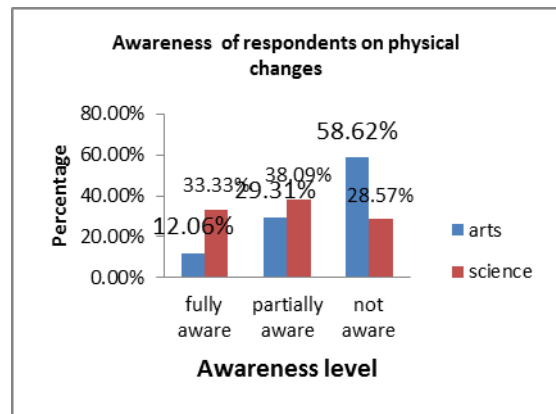


Figure no. 1

Analysis also reflected that a large percentage of girls considered physiological changes as natural process. They had positive attitude towards physiological changes. There was not a great variation in their reaction on physiological changes among the students of nuclear and joint families. It also showed that 15% of respondents were fully aware about the menstrual period before its onset, 27 % were partially aware and 58% respondents were not aware at all about it before its onset.

Table no. 1: Awareness of menstrual period before its onset cross tabulated with family type

Responses	Nuclear family	Joint family	Total
Fully aware	1 (2.27%)	14 (25%)	15 (5%)
Partially aware	8 (18.18%)	19 (33.92%)	27 (17%)
Not aware	35 (79.54%)	23 (41.07%)	58 (78%)
Total	44 (44%)	56(56%)	100%

The table shows that more numbers of students belongs to joint family were fully and partially aware about menstruation before its onset than the students belonged to nuclear family as the students belonged to joint family had multiple sources of information. The findings illustrated that 25% respondent described menstrual period as a sign of fertility and 75% described that it was process of shedding of dirty blood. Most of the students (64%) felt that menstruation is purging of body

impurities. 19% felt it as a dirty process and only 17% felt it as a natural physiology. The data indicated that 42% students had responded 12 year is the right age for menstruation. 47% students had responded 13 year is the right age for menstruation.

Table no. 2: Respondents' Knowledge on Pregnancy

Sl. No.	Conditions	No.	%
1	Union of sperms and ovum takes place	63	63
2	A boy closely hugs/kisses a girl	1	1
3	Do not know	36	36
4	Total	100	100

From the table it is clear that 63% of respondents have right knowledge on pregnancy. It can be observed that a large number of respondents (53%) had correct perception that abortion can be done in case when risks involved in carrying pregnancy for the health of the mother and foetus. However, a significant percentage (37%) of respondents perceived that abortion can be done in case of pre-marital pregnancy, in case of female foetus (5%), or as a method of family planning (2%). The data summarized that most of the respondent were not aware on contraceptives.

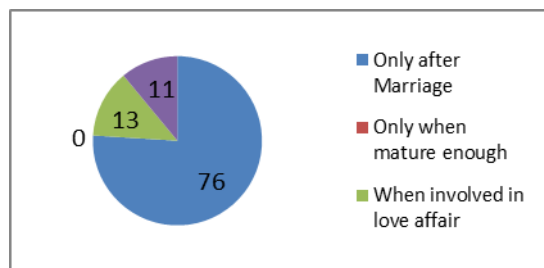


Figure no. -2

Figure no.-2 reflects that most of the respondents (76%) perceived that sexual relationship was right only after marriage. Overall analysis of data reflected that a large number of respondents were aware of the various means of spread of HIV/AIDS. The findings depicted that a significant number of respondents were either did not know, nor had information on the means of spread of HIV/AIDS.

V. DISCUSSIONS

In the recent study a small (21%) percentage of students were fully aware, 34% of the respondents were partially aware on the physiological changes that occur during the puberty period. It also depicted that most of the students were not aware (45%) at all but in case of Agrawal S. et.al.(2007), About two-third (75.6%) of the girls were aware about all the signs of adolescence.

In this study only 17% felt menstruation as a natural physiological process but according to Dube, S. et.al., K.(2012)

60% urban girls considered menstrual as natural phenomena and according to Tiwari, H. et.al. (2006), only 38.5% felt comfortable about menarche and only 31.0% believed that menstruation was a normal physiological process. If girls are mentally prepared for menarche, then the chances of depression or low self-esteem after experiencing menarche decrease. The recent data indicated that 42% students had responded 12 year is the right age for menstruation. 47% students had responded 13 year is the right age for menstruation.

Singh, A. and Rathor, R. (2012), Knowledge of teenage pregnancy and mode of pregnancy was lower in urban girls but in the recent study 63% of respondents have right knowledge on pregnancy.

In this study a large number of respondents were aware of the various means of spread of HIV/AIDS, but in case of Akther N.et. al. (2012), More than two-fifths had no knowledge on mode of transmission of AIDS. It was also found that majority of the respondents had no knowledge on symptoms of AIDS and three-fifths had no knowledge on prevention of AIDS.

VI. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above results we can conclude that the knowledge of adolescent girls was average. Thus it becomes important to address the misconceptions regarding different aspects of reproductive health through health education. Reproductive health problems should be discussed among adolescents, especially for girls through health clubs, seminars and lectures at school and college level. To identify and solve their reproductive health problems counselling should be done with the help of specialists from time to time. Such educational intervention programs must be given due importance, which will help the adolescent girls to take care of their own health and protect themselves from the risk of Reproductive health problems.

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