

AB119

A Study of the Awareness of Sexual and Reproductive Health among Unmarried Young Women

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Reproductive health affects the lives of women and men from conception to birth, through adolescence to old age, and includes the attainment and maintenance of good health as well as the prevention and treatment of ill-health. The knowledge and the awareness of sexual and reproductive health differs due to various factors. It varies due to environment, social economic conditions, educational background, age, ethnicity, religion and other factors. Sexual and reproductive health is a taboo subject that is usually not discussed in public.

The main purpose of this study is to identify the issues of unmarried young women regarding sexuality and reproductive health. Survey method was followed to collect primary data for this research while direct interviews were followed in some cases. The sample is taken from unmarried young women, irrespective of their religion and ethnicity, between 15-30 years covering the Hiniduma Grama Niladari Division.

This study found that the awareness of sexual and reproductive health among young women is low due to their low educational level. On the other hand, women have gained knowledge of sexuality through informal ways. The women who contributed to this study seem to have acquired sexual and reproductive awareness from their peers. Besides, the main source through which most of the respondents gained knowledge and information of sexual and reproductive health was the Internet. Further this research identified the vital need for improving the reproductive health knowledge of these young women in the Hiniduma division. Improving the facilities and man-power of existing governmental organizations should be looked into. The respective organizations and national health clinics should initiate further counselling and address the issues of these young women face in order to to enhance the awareness of reproductive knowledge of the young women in this area.

Key words: *sexual and reproductive health, awareness, young women*

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