ISSN(O):2582-693X
ISSN(P):3139-3314

Review Article

To Assess the Knowledge and Awareness Regarding Reproductive Health Among Rural Adolescent Girls

Renu Meena[1], Rohit Awasthi

[1]PhD Scholar, Nirwan University, Jaipur

[2]Research Supervisor, Nirwan University, Jaipur

Corresponding Author:
Renu Meena, PhD Scholar,
Nirwan University, Jaipur

E-mail:
renu14071987@gmail.com

How to cite this article: Meena R, Awasthi R. To Assess the Knowledge and Awareness Regarding Reproductive Health Among Rural Adolescent Girls. GFNPSS-IJMR 2026; 7:7: 3537-3540
Submitted: 8 July 2026: **Accepted:** 21 July 2026: **Published:** 31 July 2026

Abstract

Rapid physical, psychological, emotional, and social growth characterizes adolescence, a transitional stage where reproductive health becomes crucial. Adolescent girls who have sufficient knowledge about reproductive health are better able to maintain menstrual cleanliness, avoid early pregnancy, avoid reproductive tract infections, adopt healthy habits, and make educated decisions about their reproductive well-being. However, due to poverty, low educational attainment, cultural taboos, gender discrimination, inadequate healthcare services, and poor communication about sexual and reproductive concerns, rural teenage girls still face many obstacles to obtaining appropriate reproductive health information. Poor menstrual hygiene practices, malnutrition, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, STDs, and unfavorable maternal outcomes are all frequently caused by a lack of understanding.

Keywords: Adolescent girls; Reproductive health; Rural population; Health awareness; Menstrual hygiene; Sexual health; Family planning; Adolescent health; Health education.

Introduction

According to the World Health Organization, adolescence, which spans the ages of 10 to 19, is one of the most significant phases of human growth and development. Adolescents go through major biological, emotional, cognitive, psychological, and social changes throughout this time that have a big impact on their long-term health and wellbeing. Adolescent reproductive health is especially crucial since the healthy habits formed during this phase impact mother health, fertility patterns, future reproductive outcomes, and general quality of life.[1]

Reproductive health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system rather than merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It includes knowledge regarding puberty, menstruation, reproductive anatomy and physiology, menstrual hygiene, nutrition, contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS, reproductive rights, safe motherhood, and responsible reproductive behavior. Adequate reproductive health knowledge enables adolescents to make informed decisions, practice healthy lifestyles, and seek appropriate healthcare services whenever required.[2]

Globally, adolescents constitute nearly one-sixth of the world's population, with the majority residing in developing countries where access to reproductive health education remains limited.

https://doi.org/10.46376/ijmr/07.07.2026:3537-3540

Rural adolescent girls constitute one of the most vulnerable groups because they frequently encounter poverty, illiteracy, gender inequality, early marriage, inadequate sanitation, poor nutrition, limited healthcare infrastructure, and deeply rooted cultural beliefs that restrict open discussions about reproductive health.[3]

In India, adolescents account for a substantial proportion of the population and represent an important demographic group for achieving national health and development goals. Although various government initiatives such as the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK), Menstrual Hygiene Scheme, Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS), and Ayushman Bharat School Health Programme have strengthened adolescent health services, significant disparities continue to exist between rural and urban populations regarding reproductive health knowledge and healthcare utilization. Rural adolescent girls continue to demonstrate inadequate awareness regarding menstruation, contraception, reproductive rights, nutrition, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections.[4]

Menstrual health remains one of the most neglected aspects of adolescent reproductive health in rural communities. Numerous studies have shown that many girls experience menarche without receiving adequate information regarding menstruation, resulting in fear, anxiety, embarrassment, misconceptions, and unhygienic menstrual practices. Cultural restrictions associated with menstruation often prevent girls from participating in educational, social, and religious activities, thereby negatively influencing their physical and psychological well-being. Inadequate menstrual hygiene also increases the likelihood of reproductive tract infections and school absenteeism.[5]

Knowledge regarding contraception and family planning remains another important concern among rural adolescents. Social stigma and cultural norms often discourage parents, teachers, and healthcare providers from discussing sexual and reproductive health openly with adolescents. Consequently, many girls rely on inaccurate information obtained from peers or social media, resulting in misconceptions regarding contraception, pregnancy prevention, and reproductive rights. Lack of scientifically accurate information increases the risk of unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortion, and maternal morbidity among adolescent girls.[6]

Awareness regarding sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, remains inadequate among many rural adolescents despite national awareness campaigns. Limited understanding regarding disease transmission, preventive measures, symptoms, and available healthcare services often delays diagnosis and treatment. Fear of social discrimination and embarrassment further discourage adolescents from seeking reproductive healthcare services.[7]

Education plays a central role in improving reproductive health awareness. Schools provide an ideal environment for delivering scientifically accurate information regarding puberty, menstruation, nutrition, reproductive rights, gender equality, contraception, and disease prevention. However, implementation of comprehensive reproductive health education remains inconsistent across rural educational institutions because of inadequate teacher training, limited educational resources, and prevailing cultural sensitivities.[8]

In recent years, digital technologies have emerged as promising tools for disseminating reproductive health information among adolescents. Mobile health applications, telemedicine services, social media platforms, online educational resources, and digital counselling programmes have expanded opportunities for health education. Nevertheless, unequal access to digital technologies, poor internet connectivity, and limited digital literacy continue to restrict the effectiveness of these interventions in many rural communities. Therefore, integrated community-based and school-based educational strategies remain indispensable for strengthening reproductive health awareness among rural adolescent girls.[9]

Improving reproductive health awareness among rural adolescent girls is essential for achieving Sustainable Development Goals related to health, gender equality, education, and poverty reduction. Comprehensive reproductive health education, strengthened healthcare systems, community

https://doi.org/10.46376/ijmr/07.07.2026:3537-3540

participation, and active involvement of nursing professionals can significantly improve reproductive health outcomes and empower adolescent girls to make informed decisions regarding their health and future.[10]

1. Concept of Reproductive Health

The concept of reproductive health extends beyond the prevention and treatment of reproductive diseases and encompasses complete physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being throughout the reproductive lifespan. According to the World Health Organization, reproductive health includes the capability to reproduce safely, maintain healthy sexual relationships, access appropriate healthcare services, and exercise reproductive rights without discrimination, coercion, or violence.[11]

2. Components of Reproductive Health

Reproductive health is a multidimensional concept encompassing physical, psychological, social, and emotional well-being throughout the reproductive lifespan. For adolescent girls, reproductive health includes adequate knowledge regarding puberty, menstrual hygiene, nutrition, reproductive anatomy and physiology, prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), family planning, safe sexual behaviour, reproductive rights, gender equality, and access to adolescent-friendly healthcare services. Comprehensive reproductive health education equips adolescents with the knowledge and skills necessary to make informed health decisions and adopt healthy lifestyles.[11]

3. Reproductive Health Status of Rural Adolescent Girls

Rural adolescent girls experience numerous reproductive health challenges arising from socioeconomic disadvantage, gender inequality, inadequate educational opportunities, poor healthcare accessibility, and prevailing cultural beliefs. Studies conducted in several developing countries have consistently reported lower reproductive health literacy among rural adolescents compared with their urban counterparts.[11]

4. Knowledge Regarding Puberty and Physiological Changes

Puberty marks the beginning of reproductive maturity and involves complex hormonal, physical, psychological, and emotional changes. Appropriate knowledge regarding puberty enables adolescents to understand these developmental changes, reducing anxiety and promoting healthy adaptation. However, many rural adolescent girls enter puberty without receiving adequate information regarding normal physiological development.[12]

5. Knowledge Regarding Menstrual Health and Hygiene

Menstruation is a normal physiological process that signifies reproductive maturity in adolescent girls. Despite its biological significance, menstruation remains surrounded by myths, misconceptions, and cultural restrictions in many rural communities. Numerous studies indicate that a considerable proportion of rural adolescent girls experience menarche without prior awareness regarding menstrual physiology or hygienic management.[13]

Inadequate menstrual knowledge contributes to fear, embarrassment, anxiety, and unhealthy hygiene practices. Some girls continue using unhygienic absorbent materials such as old cloth, ash, sand, newspaper, or other unsafe materials due to poverty, limited availability of sanitary products, or lack of awareness.[14]

6. Nutritional Status and Anaemia in Rural Adolescent Girls

Adequate nutrition is fundamental for healthy growth, sexual maturation, and reproductive health during adolescence. Increased nutritional requirements associated with rapid physical growth and menstrual blood loss place adolescent girls at higher risk of nutritional deficiencies, particularly iron deficiency anaemia. Rural adolescent girls remain disproportionately affected because of inadequate dietary intake, food insecurity, poverty, recurrent infections, and limited nutritional awareness.[15]

7. Role of Nurses in Promoting Reproductive Health Awareness

Nurses play a pivotal role in improving reproductive health awareness among rural adolescent girls through health education, counselling, school health programmes, and community outreach activities. Community Health

https://doi.org/10.46376/ijmr/07.07.2026:3537-3540

Nurses, ANMs, and ASHAs educate adolescents on puberty, menstrual hygiene, nutrition, contraception, prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and the importance of seeking timely healthcare. [15]

Financial support and sponsorship: Nil

Conflicts of interests: There is no conflict of interest

References

1. World Health Organization. Adolescent health. Geneva: WHO; 2024.
2. World Health Organization. Sexual and reproductive health and rights. Geneva: WHO; 2023.
3. United Nations Population Fund. State of World Population 2024. New York: UNFPA; 2024.
4. United Nations Children's Fund. The State of the World's Children 2023. New York: UNICEF; 2023.
5. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. National Adolescent Health Programme (Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram): Strategy Handbook. New Delhi: Government of India; 2014.
6. International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), ICF. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019–21: India Report. Mumbai: IIPS; 2021.
7. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. National Health Mission: Menstrual Hygiene Scheme Guidelines. New Delhi: Government of India; 2015.
8. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS): Operational Guidelines. New Delhi: Government of India; 2018.
9. World Health Organization. Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!). Geneva: WHO; 2017.
10. United Nations. Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. New York: United Nations; 2015.
11. Chandra-Mouli V, Lane C, Wong S. What does not work in adolescent sexual and reproductive health: A review of evidence. *Glob Health Sci Pract*. 2015;3(3):333-340.
12. Patton GC, Sawyer SM, Santelli JS, et al. Our future: A Lancet commission on adolescent health and wellbeing. *Lancet*. 2016;387(10036):2423-2478.
13. Hindin MJ, Christiansen CS, Ferguson BJ. Setting research priorities for adolescent sexual and reproductive health. *J Adolesc Health*. 2013;53(1):12-
14. Blum RW, Bastos FI, Kabiru CW, Le LC. Adolescent health in the 21st century. *Lancet*. 2012;379(9826):1567-1568.
15. Das JK, Salam RA, Lassi ZS, et al. Interventions for adolescent health and nutrition. *J Adolesc Health*. 2016;59(4 Suppl):S29-S39.

https://doi.org/10.46376/ijmr/07.07.2026:3537-3540