

# Knowledge Regarding Reproductive Health among Adolescent Girls: A Descriptive Study

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## ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a period that is characterized by growth and development rapidly. They have only limited knowledge regarding sexual and reproductive health (SRH). Adolescent girls are more marginalized and face many problems in society. Owing to a lack of knowledge on SRH, they succumb to various situations such as unhealthy menstrual hygiene practices, unwanted sex, teenage pregnancy, unsafe abortions, reproductive tract infections (RTIs), and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as HIV/AIDS. These have adverse effects on their mental health. The present study explored the knowledge regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls in selected senior secondary school of Jalalabad (W) Fazilka, Punjab. Sample consisted of 30 adolescent girls studying in selected school. Purposive sampling technique was followed to select the sample. Level of knowledge was assessed by structured knowledge questionnaire. The study was conducted in the October, 2023.

Study findings revealed that majority (70%) of the adolescent girls had average knowledge, 33% of the adolescent girls had good knowledge while 20% of the adolescent girls had poor knowledge regarding Reproductive health.

In conclusion, this study revealed that although majority of the adolescent girls had average knowledge regarding reproductive health.

## INTRODUCTION

India has a unique opportunity now to improve the health and nutritional status of its people. The country is in a position to invest increasing amounts of resources in social sectors as a result of economic progress. With recognition of the importance of health and nutrition for national development, the prospects for improved and equitable health and nutrition are now better than they have ever been.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescents as those between 10 and 19 years of age.<sup>1</sup> Adolescent girls account for over 600 million population in the world today. There are around five hundred million adolescents living in countries with low and middle income.<sup>2</sup> Girls constitute half of the adolescent population. There is not much attention given to the specific challenges and problems faced by adolescent girls.<sup>3</sup> In India, the adolescent population constitutes about 21% (243 million) of the total population.<sup>4</sup>

The existence of social taboos regarding SRH renders women often forgo health services. Around eight lakh

adolescent girls give birth every year in low and middle-income countries. The 2014 World Health Statistics reveals that the average birth rate among 15-19 years olds is 49 per 1000 girls globally.<sup>5,6</sup>

The lack of reproductive health knowledge makes them adopt various risk-taking behaviours, affecting their mental as well as physical health. They are not trained at the secondary school level in coping with various critical life situations; as a result, they don't have the skill of prompt response to these situations. Hence, a comprehensive reproductive health knowledge assessment is necessary, which will help to further plan educational activities in the future.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Study area:** The present study was conducted in Government Girls Senior Secondary school, Jalalabad, West. Sample was collected from students of class 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. This educational institute runs under government of Punjab. It is located in the main market of Jalalabad with elegant infrastructure and building as well as adequate staff.

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**KEYWORDS:** Reproductive health, adolescent girls, school, knowledge

**Sampling and sample size:** Purposive sampling technique was utilised and sample size was 30 adolescent girls.

**Description of Research Tool:** The tool consisted of two parts:

Part-I: Socio-demographic profile : Socio-demographic data was designated to provide background information of the school adolescent girls like age, religion, place of living, present class, education of mother, education of father, source of information.

Part-II: Structured knowledge questionnaire: It comprised of 30 multiple choice questions to assess the knowledge of reproductive health among adolescent girls of Government Girls Senior Secondary school, Jalalabad. Each question had 4 options, where multiple choice questions carry one

mark for correct answer and zero for incorrect answer.

**Data collection and analysis:** Data collection was done on knowledge regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls using structures knowledge questionnaire. Prior to study, written permission was taken from the Principal of the school for data collection. Nature and purpose of the study was explained to the principal. Verbal consent was also taken from adolescent girls. Structured questionnaire were distributed to them. Time taken to fill out the structured tool was approximately 20-30 minutes. Analysis was done to assess frequency distribution and level of knowledge of adolescent girls regarding reproductive health.

## RESULTS

### 1. Sample Characteristics:

**Table 1: Frequency and Percentage distribution of sample characteristics N =30**

Sr. No.	Demographic Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	<b>Age (In years)</b>		
	13-14years	05	16.0
	15-16years	12	40.0
	17-18years	13	43.3
2.	<b>Religion</b>		
	Sikh	21	70.0
	Hindu	06	20.0
	Christian	03	10.0
3.	<b>Place of living</b>		
	Urban	21	70.0
	Rural	09	30.0
4	<b>Present Class</b>		
	11th	10	33.0
	12th	20	67.0
5	<b>Education of Mother</b>		
	Illiterate	05	16.6
	Up to 5th standard	10	33.3
	Up to 12th standard	10	33.3
	Graduate and Above	05	16.6
6	<b>Education of Father</b>		
	Illiterate	05	16.6
	Up to 5th standard	12	40.0
	Up to 12th standard	08	26.6
	Graduate and above	05	16.6
7	<b>Source of information</b>		
	Internet	05	16.6
	Health Personnel	10	33.3
	Friends	05	16.6
	T.V./Newspaper/Magazines	10	33.3
8	<b>Stream</b>		
	Arts	17	56.6
	Commerce	13	43.3

Table 1 represents the frequency and percentage distribution of sample characteristics of study subjects.

Table shows that majority of adolescent girls (43.3%) were in the age group of 17-18 years, 40% were 15-16 years old, while 16% were 13-14 years of age. According to Religion, 70% of adolescent girls were Sikh, 20% were Hindu while 10% were Christian. In the context of place of living, the majority (70%) were urban residents, while 30% were rural. According to present class, majority i.e. 67% were studying in 12<sup>th</sup> class, while 33% were 11<sup>th</sup> standard students. As per education of mother, 33.3% of student's mothers were educated up to 12<sup>th</sup> standard and 33.3% were only 5<sup>th</sup> pass while 16.60% were graduate and above, and 16.6% were illiterate. As per education of the father, 40% were educated upto 5<sup>th</sup> standard followed by 26.6% upto 12<sup>th</sup> standard while illiterate and post-graduates had a percentage of 16.6% and 16.6% respectively. With regard to source of information of the subjects regarding reproductive health, 33.3% had source of information from T.V/newspaper/magazines, 16.6% through internet, 16.6% through the friends and 33.3% by health personnel's. In context of stream the majority (56.6%) were arts, while 43.3% were commerce respectively.

Hence it can be concluded that majority of the subjects were in the age group between 17-18 years. According to religion, more than half of the subjects were Sikhs. As per place of living majority of the subjects were from urban livings. Approximately half of the adolescents father's and mother's were having up to 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> standard. Most of the subjects were influenced by T.V./Newspaper/Magazines/health personnel's. As per stream majority of the subjects were from arts stream.

2. Knowledge regarding reproductive health:

**Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of adolescent girls according to level of knowledge regarding reproductive health N=30**

Level of Knowledge	Knowledge Score	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Good	>20	01	3.3
Average	10-20	21	70
Poor	<10	08	26

**Maximum Score: 30**

Table 2 depicts frequency and percentage distribution of adolescent girls according to level of knowledge regarding reproductive health. It shows maximum

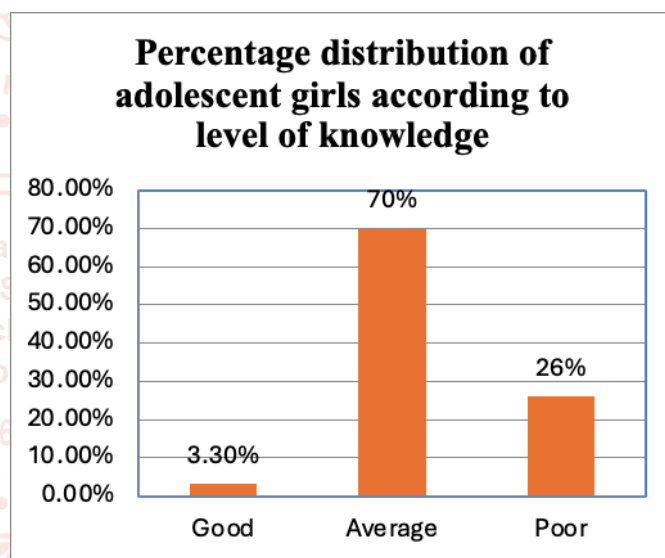
adolescent girls (70%) had average knowledge regarding reproductive health, followed by 26% who had poor knowledge while only 3.3% had good knowledge regarding reproductive health.

It can be concluded that majority of the girls had average knowledge regarding reproductive health.

**DISCUSSION**

The findings depict that maximum adolescent girls (70%) had average knowledge regarding reproductive health. The above findings were similar with the findings as reported by **Dhaneswari Jena (2013)**<sup>7</sup> that maximum (80%) sample had average knowledge regarding reproductive health. Similarly, **Hakem et al. (2017)**<sup>8</sup> revealed that in India, 59.6% of non-government school girls aged 13–19 years knew about the menstrual cycle before menarche, while 48.8% of government school girls had such knowledge.

**Figure 1**



**CONCLUSION**

Assessing knowledge on reproductive health among adolescent girls is quite effective if done in a well organized and scientific way. It creates an increased awareness among them, which can empower them to take care of their own health as well as protect themselves from possible reproductive health problems. An integrated and collective approach by teachers, nurses, health personnel, parent and Govt. Should be carried out for a holistic development of adolescent health. It ensures a sound mind in a sound body which can enable the individual having a safe mother hood in future.

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