

# **Knowledge & Perception about Family life Education & Reproductive Health Issues among Unmarried Adolescent Women of Rural India: Evidences from DLHS-3**

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## ***Introduction***

- The family life education (FLE) program entails to provide knowledge, practice value and attitude that affect family relationships.
- It proposes to develop qualities and attitudes on which successful family life depends.
- The family life/ sex education also proposes transfiguration of a boy child into manhood and a girl child into womanhood.
- Adolescents appear to have many misconceptions related to different aspects of reproductive health.

## **Purpose of the study**

In view of:

- Lack of proper knowledge among adolescents and
- Changing scenario of adolescents' life style in India, especially in rural areas,

It becomes necessary to assess:

- The knowledge of family life education
- Other reproductive health issues and
- Menstrual practices among unmarried adolescent women of rural India.

## The Data

### ***District Level Household Survey (DLHS) -3***

- For the first time information about family life education, menstrual practices and reproductive health issues have been collected in the third round of DLHS, from unmarried adolescent women aged 15 – 24.
- In all 1, 66, 260 unmarried adolescent women aged 15 – 24 years are interviewed from all States and Union Territories and Districts of India.
- Around 73 percent of surveyed unmarried women are from rural areas.

### **Profile of unmarried adolescent rural women**

- A little over three fourth of the women are young (15- 19 years) while 23 percent are old adolescents (20 -24 years).
- Around one third of the women have level of education 10 years and above.
- More than two third of the women are Hindu.
- Four fifth of the women are scheduled castes/tribes, one third are other backward classes and one fourth are other castes.
- One fourth women are from middle & fourth wealth quintile while one of every seventh women from poorest and richest wealth quintile

### **Awareness about FL/sex education**

- More than two third women are aware of FL/sex education.
- Older women (aged 20-24 years) are more aware of FL/sex education.
- Highly educated women are more (86 percent) aware of FL/ sex education.
- Christian women are more (74 percent) aware of FL/ sex education.
- Other castes women are more aware of FL/sex education.
- Richest wealth quintile women are more (85 percent) aware of FL/sex education.

### **Perception: FL/sex education is important**

- Seventy seven percent women perceive importance of FL/sex education.
- About 84 percent older women perceive that FL/sex education is important.
- Ninety two percent highly educated women perceive importance of FL/sex education.
- More than four fifth other castes women perceive importance of FL/sex education.
- Ninety one percent richest wealth quintile women feel that FL/sex education is important.

### **Ever received FL/sex education**

- Forty three percent women have ever received FL/sex education.
- Forty two percent younger women have ever received FL/sex education.
- Around 64 percent highly educated women have ever received FL/sex education.
- More Christian women have ever received FL/sex education.
- Three fifth richest and one fourth poorest women have ever received FL/sex education.

### **Opinion about FL/sex education**

- Less than one fourth of the women think that FL/sex education should be introduced by the age 18 years or above
- More than one third women are of the view that FL/sex education should be introduced when the women is aged 15-17 years.
- Less than one fourth women opine that FL/sex education should be given when the women is 12-14 years old.
- One out of every 6 women perceives that the right age for introducing FL/sex education is when the women is less than 12 years old.

## **Opinion (contd.)**

- Around 42 percent of the women feel that the right educational level for providing FL/sex education is when the women is in standard 10 and above.
- One out of every eight women think that FL/sex education should be introduced when the women is in standard 8-9.
- Forty five percent women are of the view that FL/sex education should be given when the women is in standard 7 or below.

## **Sources of FL/sex education**

- More than 80 percent of women opine that knowledge of FL/sex education should be provided by the parents.
- Sixty percent women think that FL/sex education should be provided by teacher / school/college while less than half are of the view that it should be provided by brother/sister/ sister in law.
- Less than 5 percent of women get knowledge about FL /sex education from partner/ youth club/Mandal/ NGO worker.

## **Menstrual problem during last 3 months**

- *More than one fifth of women have menstruation related problems.*
- The major problems are painful period (83 percent), short or frequent/ irregular period (22 percent) and bleeding related problems (19 percent).
- Richest wealth quintile women have less bleeding related problems
- Not much differential is found in case of suffering from various menstrual problems by background characteristics.
- Muslim women have more menstrual related problems compared to women belonging to other religious groups.

## **Menstrual hygiene**

- *Menstrual practices during menstruation i.e. menstrual hygiene*
- Around 88 percent of women use cloths or locally made napkins during menstruation.
- Less than one fifth women use sanitary napkins during menstruation.
- Around 90 percent of the younger women use cloths and locally made napkins and little more than one fourth of the older women use sanitary napkins.
- Use of sanitary napkins is more among the women who are highly educated and are from higher wealth quintile groups.
- Christian women use sanitary napkins more compared to other religious group's women.

## **Opinion about some reproductive health issues**

- Three fifth women are of the view that it is possible to know about the sex of the baby before it is born.
- One out of every sixteen women is of the opinion that when a woman has intercourse for the first time she has to bleed.
- One fourth women think that a woman can get pregnant on the very first time she has sexual intercourse.
- One fifth women is of the view that a woman is most likely to get pregnant if she has sexual intercourse half way between her menstrual period.

## **Result of Multivariate analysis**

- The logistic regression indicates that older women, women having higher level of education, Christian, other castes and richest women are more likely to have awareness about FL/sex education and perception that FL/sex education is important and have ever received FL/ sex education.
- Highly educated women are six times more likely to be aware of FL/ sex education than non-literates.

- Richest women are two times more likely to be aware of FL/ sex education than the poorest women.

### **Results (contd...)**

- Highly educated women are 8 times more likely to receive FL/ sex education than non-literates & perceive importance of FL/ sex education.
- Richest women are two times more likely to receive FL/ sex education than the poorest women and perceive importance of FL/ sex education.
- In case of socio-economic determinants of menstrual practices older women appear to be better placed than the younger ones.
- Women having higher education, Christian, other castes and the richest women practice more menstrual hygiene than younger women, women having low level of education, women of other religions, castes and second, middle and fourth quintiles.

### **Conclusion**

- The study suggests that there is a need to create awareness among the adolescent women, mainly the vulnerable adolescents such as non-literates and those belonging to poorer section of the society.
- Develop appropriate strategy and awareness campaign so as to reach all the women.
- Even if unmarried adolescents are aware of FL/ sex education and perceive that it is important , many of them do not receive FL/ sex education.
- Policy planners should identify proper channel to influence the adolescents as well as the key persons to make people favorable towards FL/sex education.