

Awareness and Utilization of Digital Devices among Urban and Rural Undergraduates for Sexual and Reproductive Health Knowledge

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In cyberspace world, digital technology has become an integrated part in youth lives. Most researchers have stated that web directories come first when considering where youth goes in search of questions about sex. However, some argue that the accessibility to the digital devices vary by the living sector. The main objective of this paper is to investigate the urban - rural differences among university undergraduates in their awareness in accessing information on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) issues.

This study is based on primary data collected using a self-administrated questionnaire from the students in the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, in 2018. Hundred final year students were selected using purposive sample method. The mean age at which they begin to search SRH related facts vary by their living sector (urban 21 years and rural 23 years).

The main reason for this difference being, most of undergraduates from the rural sector obtain SRH awareness through printed sources (52%). The smart phone was the most popular digital device among both students from urban and rural sector. While more than 80% of urban sector students mentioned that they selected digital devices to get SRH awareness because it protects their privacy. While students from rural sector expressed that they can handle it easily. Of the urban respondents 33% were 'highly satisfied' with the digital devices they used for this purpose while for those in the rural, it was only 6%. Because students from rural sector stressed that it has disturbed their education by consuming a lot of their time. Therefore, it can be concluded that professionals who provide health education should maintain integrity, accuracy, and authenticity in the methods they use in obtaining SRH awareness through digital devices as most of young people use digital devices as a source for getting SRH awareness.

Key words: *Digital devices, Sector differences, Sexual and reproductive health, University students*