

# **Needs and Expectations of Unmarried Female Youth on Reproductive Health Services: A Case Study in Selected Urban Settlement Communities in Colombo**

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In Sri Lanka, most of the reproductive health care services mainly focus on married women. However, in many programmes unmarried females have not been given adequate attention. Literature on youth reproductive health provides evidence that majority of female unmarried youth are vulnerable to reproductive health risks due lack of access to proper reproductive health information and services. Therefore, the main objective of this paper is to examine unmarried female youths' needs and expectations on reproductive health services. This study is based on a qualitative approach and case studies are used to gather data. Fifteen women who live in urban settlement communities located in Colombo Municipal Council area were selected for case studies. All respondents were between ages fifteen to twenty nine. Data were analysed by using content analysis. Results reveal that almost all unmarried female youth stated that though they are in need of accessing reproductive health services, they have not been aware about such services. It is also found that many female youth have faced obstacles in accessing available reproductive health care services as they mainly focus on maternal and child health. Further, many of them had negative attitudes on discussing their reproductive health related issues with their mothers or relatives as they feel shy, embarrassed and uncomfortable when discussing these issues. Moreover, almost all stated that they need clinics which can provide reproductive health related education, counselling, family planning services, and treatments for sexually transmitted infections within their community settings. Also they expect more friendly and effective service providers who can communicate and listen to them with respect and dignity and also with keen concern about their confidentiality. Results suggests that female unmarried youth need to be given friendly and reliable reproductive health related services to enhance their health and quality of life.

**Key words:** *Female unmarried youth; Needs and expectations; Reproductive health care Services.*