

Challenges Faced by Mothers in Disseminating Sexual and Reproduction Health (SRH) Knowledge: A Case Study of Adolescent Children in Gampaha District, Sri Lanka

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Adolescents' knowledge on sexual and reproduction health (SRH) as a growing concern today. Conservative societies consider discussion of SRH as a taboo but they expect the adolescents to reach safe adulthood. In spite of many efforts to enhance knowledge of the adolescents, dissemination has not been effective. This study has investigated challenges faced by mothers in disseminating SRH Knowledge to adolescents and the factors that have influenced. Primary data have been used with a sample of 210 mothers with 20 adolescent children from *Akkara Panaha* GN Division of Katana DS Division in Gampaha District.

Results show that the majority (or 69%) of the mothers have discussed about SRH related topics with their adolescent sons and daughters. Among the mothers, 70% are willing to provide SRH Knowledge to adolescent daughters, but only 37% are willing to provide knowledge for adolescent sons which leave the adolescent boys marginalized from obtaining accurate knowledge. Discussion of SRH knowledge for adolescent daughters has been a challenge for 44% of the mothers. Among them 62% have faced the challenge of daughters not being aware on menstruation and remaining 32% of the mothers were doubtful of the knowledge they provided. All the mothers with adolescent sons have stated that discussion of SRH related topics with their adolescent sons as a challenge. 34% of them are doubtful of the knowledge they provided and the remaining 33% equally find it difficult to talk about SRH topics freely and they are doubtful whether the child has understood clearly. This study has also identified that mothers' willingness for dissemination and the openness of the adolescents to obtain knowledge play a major role in the dissemination process. This concludes that mothers are willing to take up the challenge in disseminating knowledge for adolescent children if they are correctly educated on the ways to

approach children by building a secure environment where the children could confide on parents and parents could be more confident in providing SRH knowledge.

Key words: *Adolescent, Sexual and Reproductive Health*