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[AASoci](#) > Vol.2 No.4, December 2012



Adolescent Health in India: Still at Crossroads

PDF (Size: 51KB) PP. 320-324 DOI: 10.4236/aasoci.2012.24042

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ABSTRACT

Internationally, Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH) has become a priority programme approach to help the future generations have a safe, healthy and satisfactory life. India is yet to develop a comprehensive policy on ARSH mainly due to lack of inter-ministerial collaboration, socio-cultural and politico-religious factors, even though evidence from surveys and non-governmental organization projects has corroborated the case for ARSH since late 1980s. Fortunately, recent evidence provided by Sample Registration Survey (SRS) 1999, Census 2001, National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-II and District Level Household Survey (DLHS) 2004 particularly on early marriage, teen pregnancy, anaemia and unmet need for contraception has led GoI to recognize the importance of adolescent health. However, a comprehensive ARSH policy is yet to emerge, since components of adolescent health are being addressed by separate ministries and departments. Adolescent health in India is still in an infant stage and at the risk of infanticide. From "health for the adolescents" to "health with the adolescents", it is still a long way to go.

KEYWORDS

Adolescents; Reproductive and Sexual Health; Policy; Qualitative Study; Intersectoral Coordination; India

Cite this paper

 Gupta, M. , Ramani, K. & Soors, W. (2012). Adolescent Health in India: Still at Crossroads. *Advances in Applied Sociology*, 2, 320-324. doi: 10.4236/aasoci.2012.24042.

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