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Emerging Social Issues Division

Social Policy and Population Section

### *Asia-Pacific Population Journal*

**Article** **Promoting Knowledge of Sexual Illnesses among Women in Bangladesh: Can Non-governmental Organizations Play a Role?**

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**Abstract** Bangladesh formally accepted the principles of the International Conference on Population and Development, (ICPD) (Cairo, 1994), in 1997 and the management of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), along with other components of reproductive health services, was expected to be the subject of a sustained publicity campaign. This study assesses the knowledge of the transmission, symptoms and prevention of STIs among women in rural Bangladesh. Data for this study came from the demographic and health surveillance system of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) covering 70 villages in 10 regions of the country. The surveillance system provided an updated sampling frame from which a total of 1,663 adult women were selected at random. An open-ended test instrument was used to assess the knowledge of sexual illnesses among women. The demographic and socio-economic information of the sample women and their participation in non-governmental organization (NGO) forums were collected by sample survey. Data were collected in April 2000. Findings revealed that sociodemographic factors such as years of schooling and the duration of involvement with NGO forum activities had a significant positive association with the knowledge of sexual illnesses. Multivariate analysis also suggested that the education of women and their participation in NGOs were significantly more likely to raise the knowledge when the influence of age, media exposure and occupation of husband were controlled. The paper concludes that NGO-led health forums can be an effective medium in promoting STI knowledge among women in Bangladesh.

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