



Knowledge. Voice. Democracy.

PRIA

[August 2021]

City-level multi-stakeholder dialogue on strengthening facility-based intervention to target adolescent health



Organised by: PRIA, Gurugram University, Health Department,
Gurugram and SHLC

Venue: Office of Civil Surgeon, Gurugram

Introduction

A study by PRIA, Gurugram University and SHLC (University of Glasgow) reported poor levels of awareness among adolescents in Gurugram with regard to health systems designed to cater to their needs, namely the Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (also known as Mitrata clinics in Gurugram). Further, the study also highlighted need for more engagement of frontline health staff and community workers with the adolescents living in urban informal settlements. In order to increase outreach of community and primary health services among adolescents and to inculcate independent health seeking behavior in them, it is important to widen the scope of interventions surrounding adolescent health and to scale them up.

Intervention from city-level health systems will be crucial to increase awareness and uptake of adolescent health services and to accommodate modifications within the existing design of implementation of provisions under Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK). A participatory approach to designing the health systems will ensure that the demand and supply side converge on their needs and requirements. In order to achieve participation of target group and to streamline community participation in health outreach efforts, it is important to include district health officials from the supply side and adolescents from the demand side.

Health Department, Gurugram and Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), together with Gurugram University, Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF) and Centre for Sustainable, Healthy and Learning Cities (SHLC), University of Glasgow organized a multi-stakeholder city consultation on **strengthening facility-based intervention to target adolescent health** on August 18, 2021 at the Office of Civil Surgeon, Gurugram.

Objectives

The purpose of conducting the consultation was to:

- Discuss the findings of a participatory survey with adolescents in Gurugram (PRIA, SHLC)
- Present a platform for adolescents in urban informal settlements to envisage adolescent friendly health systems from their perspective and to put forward their agenda to the district medical officials
- Roundtable discussion with city-level health officials and other stakeholders regarding the implementation of RKSK scheme in the city and to suggest pathways to improve accessibility and acceptability of health services among adolescents

The event was attended by Civil and Deputy Civil Surgeon, Gurugram who engaged with adolescents as well as representatives of civil society and Gurugram university to explore the ways in which Government, civil society and university can play a synergistic role in institutionalising adolescent participation in improving health outcomes in urban areas. Adolescents presented a manifesto prepared by them on how ‘Mitrata clinic’ facilities can be made effective and adolescent friendly.

Prior to the city consultation, adolescents from urban informal settlements in Gurugram were facilitated by the team at PRIA to envisage health systems from their perspective through a participatory visioning exercise. This was an attempt to highlight before city-level health officials about the importance of adopting a participatory approach to design of health systems, taking into consideration their needs as well as demands on health. An aspirational mapping activity was undertaken by adolescents that led to them designing their ideal health clinic on 13th and 14th August, 2021 at PRIA.



Fig. Aspirational mapping activity with adolescents in PRIA

The adolescents were briefed about the components of RSKS scheme by the Mitrata Clinic counsellor, Mr. Sandeep. RSKS scheme encompasses six main themes under its umbrella: **Sexual and reproductive health, menstrual hygiene, nutrition, violence, safety and mental health**. He also enlightened the participants about facilities available at the Mitrata Clinic like IFA (Iron Folic Acid) and de-worming tablet distribution, menstrual hygiene products like sanitary napkins and screening for anaemia, besides distribution of IEC material.

Presently, while counselling services are available at the AFHC situated in District hospital, Gurugram, there is a need to ensure better accessibility to health systems as well as counselling services for adolescents through other primary health care facilities like Primary Health Centre, Urban primary health centre, Community Health Centre and Sub-Divisional Hospital.

Ram Aravind from PRIA presented the findings of the participatory survey conducted with 330 adolescents from 5 urban informal settlements in Gurugram (Sikanderpur, Chakkarpur, Nathupur, Ghata and Harijan Basti). The findings related to access to health systems was taken up for discussion with health officials. The study reported poor health-seeking behaviour among adolescents and low levels of awareness among adolescents regarding AFHCs. The PRIA study even reported low preference among adolescents to seek treatment from Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics. A key recommendation of the study team regarding improving accessibility to health systems for adolescents was to institutionalise and strengthen adolescent participation in health policy making.

In order to empower adolescents to develop agency with regard to their health and well-being, they were encouraged to present their manifesto on ideal AFHC to the health authorities based on their experience of visiting AFHC as well as participation in the visioning exercise.

The key points raised by the adolescents for improving health service delivery through Mitrata Clinic:

- Given the adolescent population of Gurugram, increase number of AFHCs, especially catering to adolescents from informal settlements
- Need for male and female counsellors in each AFHC
- Sexual and Reproductive health education must be made available for boys as well
- Revive peer education component of RSKS scheme to increase use of AFHC services.
- AFHCs should be situated closer to the informal settlements to reduce cost of transportation to go the centre

- Soft skills for AFHC support and medical staff, especially skills to engage with adolescents
- Suitable, locally-relevant behaviour change communication material should be distributed to adolescents in the community
- Improve community outreach by Frontline Health Workers

Post the presentation by adolescents, round-table discussions were held with the Civil Surgeon, university representatives, civil society and the deputy civil surgeon.

The civil surgeon, Dr. Virender Yadav, while highlighting the evidence on poor levels of awareness among adolescent boys and girls on the issues of sexual and reproductive health and nutrition, spoke about how the inclusion of topics in school curriculum was expected to increase their awareness on such matters.



However, the statement by civil surgeon excludes out-of-school children who require more awareness. Similarly, outreach about SRH awareness solely through school text books doesn't provide them with the right amount of information as evidence has shown. It highlights the need of dedicated preventive health systems and arrangements for adolescents to exercise independent health-seeking behaviour.

The deputy civil surgeon, Dr Isha Narang highlighted the following three key challenges to strong implementation of RKS scheme in Gurugram city.

- Gurugram is non-RKS district, hence monitoring and evaluation of the scheme is poor
- There is lack of skilled human-resources for counselling; there is only one AFHC counsellor catering to a population of 30,000 adolescents in the city. The national average is worse, one counsellor for a population of 1.5 lakh adolescents
- Only one AFHC exists in the city of Gurugram; even though primary health facilities like CHC, UPHC have the provision of setting up AFHC, the medical officer is the only health professional, in charge of counselling as well as diagnosis.
- Other than the AFHC in district hospital, all adolescent health facilities are delivered as part of General OPD(Out-Patient Department)
- The referral systems in the AFHCs are weak as there is only one health counsellor
- Public funding to improve health systems for adolescents is not commensurate with the demand
- Peer educator program has been discontinued in the state of Haryana

Key take-aways from the discussion with the health officials:

- Lack of human resources to operate in the clinics hinders the penetration of services to cover the adolescent population of Gurugram.
- There is a need to establish more AFHCs with clear signage and trained counsellors
- At present, counsellors visit schools to offer their services; there are no clear plans as to how the out-of-school children could be reached
- An alternate sustainable plan to provide awareness to adolescent, except through school textbooks doesn't exist.
- There are no plans to revive the peer educator component of RKS scheme

Summarising the key points discussed during the consultation, **the following key policy recommendations were presented to the city-level health officials.**

- It was decided that the now defunct peer educator component of RKSK should be revived in the city. The adolescents who presented their vision would be trained as peer educators to work directly with communities.
- PRIA would facilitate training of a cadre of peer educators in the five urban informal settlements, thereby institutionalising adolescent participation
- Regular trainings for peer educators will be provided.
- The university will provide man-power(interns) in the form of health administrators as well as counsellors



Fig. Adolescents present the manifesto before the deputy civil surgeon, Gurugram

Annexure:

1. List of participants:

- Manish Kumar- Chakkarpur
- Gudiya Khatun- Chakkarpur
- Archana Saini- Community for Social Change and Development
- Jyoti- Harijan Colony
- Raj Maurya- Ghata
- Shivani- Ghata
- Sandip Singh- Counsellor, Civil Hospital
- Elizabeth- Community for Social Change and Development
- Dr Hawa Singh- Gurugram University
- Dr Amarjeet Kaur- Gurugram University

2. Manifesto prepared by adolescents for improved facilities in Mitrata Clinics

PRIA@40



हमारा स्वास्थ्य, हमारी आवाज

(प्रिया, मार्था फेरल फाउंडेशन, एस.एच.एल.सी., ग्लासगो विश्वविद्यालय और गुरुग्राम विश्वविद्यालय द्वारा एक पहल¹)

मित्रता क्लिनिक (एडोलेसेंट फ्रेंडली हेल्थ क्लिनिक) सुविधाओं को प्रभावी और किशोर अनुकूल बनाने के लिए गुरुग्राम की अनौपचारिक बस्तियों के किशोरों का घोषणा पत्र

'मित्रता क्लिनिक' (एडोलेसेंट फ्रेंडली हेल्थ क्लिनिक) सेवाओं में सुधार के लिए, गुरुग्राम शहरकी अनौपचारिक बस्तियों के किशोर निम्नलिखित परिवर्तनों की आशा करते हैं:

- गुरुग्राम की किशोर आबादी के अनुरूप, खासकर अनौपचारिक बस्तियों के किशोरों को सेवा प्रदान करने में सक्षम किशोर अनुकूल मित्रता क्लिनिकों (AFHC) की संख्या में वृद्धि की जाये।
- प्रत्येक मित्रता क्लिनिक में महिला और पुरुष परामर्शदाता उपलब्ध हों।
- यौन एवं प्रजनन स्वास्थ्य (SRH) शिक्षा लड़कों के लिए भी उपलब्ध करवाई जाये।
- मित्रता क्लिनिक सेवाओं के उपयोग को बढ़ाने के लिए राष्ट्रीय किशोर स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रम के अंतर्गत 'पीयर एजुकेटर' घटक को कार्यशील बनाया जाये।
- मित्रता क्लिनिक अनौपचारिक बस्तियों के नज़दीक स्थित होने चाहिए ताकि क्लिनिक तक पहुँचने में परिवहन-व्यय कम हो और आने-जाने में कठिनाई न हो।
- मित्रता क्लिनिक के सहयोगियों और चिकित्सा कर्मचारियों के लिए व्यवहार कुशलता, मुख्यतः किशोरों के साथ घुलने-मिलने के कौशल अनिवार्य पर अनिवार्य रूप से जोर दिया जाये।
- मित्रता क्लिनिक में कम उम्र के परामर्शदाता होने से किशोरों में निजी स्वास्थ्य संबंधी मामलों पर बातचीत करने का आत्मविश्वास बढ़ेगा और वे खुलकर परामर्श ले सकेंगे।
- समुदाय में किशोरों को उपयुक्त, स्थानीय रूप से प्रासंगिक व्यवहार परिवर्तन सामग्री वितरित की जानी चाहिए।
- फ्रंटलाइन स्वास्थ्य कार्यकर्ताओं द्वारा सामुदायिक स्तर पर अपनी पहुँच में सुधार करने की आवश्यकता है, विशेष रूप से अनौपचारिक बस्तियों में रहने वाले प्रवासी परिवारों के बच्चों और स्कूल छोड़ चुके बच्चों तक अपनी पहुँच बनाने के लिए।

यह घोषणा पत्र 13 और 14 अगस्त, 2021 को पार्टिसिपेटरी रिसर्च इन एशिया (प्रिया), नई दिल्ली में किशोरों के लिए आयोजित एक विज्ञान कार्यशाला के दौरान हुई चर्चा के आधार पर तैयार किया गया है। इस कार्यशाला को आयोजित करने का उद्देश्य, मित्रता क्लिनिक में उपलब्ध सेवाओं के कम उपयोग और सेवाओं की अपर्याप्त जानकारी के कारणों का गहराई से पता लगाना, किशोर स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए किशोरों की भागीदारी को बढ़ावा देना तथा किशोरों के जरिये से नीतिगत परिवर्तनों हेतु सुझाव देना है। हमें आशा है की घोषणा पत्र की अनुशंसाओं से मित्रता क्लिनिक तक किशोरों की पहुँच और सेवाओं के वितरण में सुधार होगा।

राष्ट्रीय किशोर स्वास्थ्य कार्यक्रम (RKSK) की शुरुआत राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन कार्यक्रम के अंतर्गत 7 जनवरी 2014 में की गयी थी। इस कार्यक्रम में किशोरों (10 से 19 वर्ष आयु की लड़कियों और लड़कों) के लिए विभिन्न सेवायें उपलब्ध हैं। इन सेवाओं के संबंध में परामर्श और किशोरों की विभिन्न आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति, किशोर-विशिष्ट स्वास्थ्य देखभाल की व्यापक पहुँच सुनिश्चित करने के उद्देश्य से एडोलेसेंट फ्रेंडली हेल्थ क्लिनिक (AFHC) की स्थापना का प्रावधान है।

गुरुग्राम में किए गए सहभागी शोध अध्ययन में स्वास्थ्य के प्रति किशोरों का खराब दृष्टिकोण सामने आया। सर्वेक्षण में भाग लेने वाले 91% किशोरों को एडोलेसेंट फ्रेंडली हेल्थ क्लिनिक की जानकारी नहीं थी। माताओं के साथ केन्द्रीय-समूह परिचर्चा में किशोर स्वास्थ्य के मामले में फ्रंटलाइन स्वास्थ्य कार्यकर्ताओं की पहुँच को कम पाया गया।

कोरोना महामारी की स्थिति जिसने स्वास्थ्य प्रणाली पर अत्यधिक प्रभाव डाला है, और किशोरों में स्वास्थ्य के प्रति सुस्त रवैये को ध्यान में रखते हुए, ऐसे तरीकों का पता लगाना आवश्यक है जिनके माध्यम से एडोलेसेंट फ्रेंडली हेल्थ क्लिनिक (मित्रता क्लिनिक) के साथ किशोरों की सहभागिता और संपर्क को बढ़ाया और मजबूत किया जा सके और अधिक से अधिक किशोर जागरूक हो सकें और साथ ही सेवाओं से लाभ प्राप्त कर सकें। सुविधा-आधारित हस्तक्षेपों को लागू करना और उन्हें मजबूत बनाना सही दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम है जो स्वास्थ्य के प्रति किशोरों के दृष्टिकोण को सकारात्मक बनाएगा।

1 किशोर लड़कों व लड़कियों के साथ यह सहभागी शोध गुरुग्राम शहर की 5 अनौपचारिक बस्तियों (हरिजन बस्ती, चकरपुर, घाटा, सिंकरपुर और नाधपुर) में किया गया है। इस शोध का उद्देश्य किशोर स्वास्थ्य के क्षेत्र में सहभागी शोध की पद्धति के प्रयोग को बढ़ावा देना है।



Our Health, Our Voice

(PRIA, Martha Farrell Foundation, SHLC (University of Glasgow) and Gurugram University Initiative¹)

Manifesto by adolescents living in Informal Settlements in Gurugram to make Mitrata clinic facilities effective and adolescent friendly

In order to improve facilities in Mitrata Clinics (AFHC services), adolescents in urban informal settlements in Gurugram envision the following changes:

- Given the adolescent population of Gurugram, increase number of Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHC), especially catering to adolescents from informal settlements
- Need for female and male counsellors in each AFHC
- Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) education should be made available for boys as well
- Revive Peer Educator component of the RSKS scheme to increase use of AFHC services
- Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics should be situated closer to the informal settlements to reduce cost of transportation to go to the center
- Soft skills for AFHC support and medical staff, especially skills to engage with adolescents
- Counsellors of younger age at the AFHCs will increase confidence among adolescents to have conversations about private health-related matters and open up to seek counselling.
- Suitable, locally-relevant behavior change material (IEC) should be distributed to adolescents in the community.
- Improve community outreach by Frontline Health Workers, especially targeting out-of-school children and children from migrant families living in informal settlements

In order to explore, in-depth, the reasons behind poor uptake of AFHC services and insufficient knowledge regarding cost-effective medical services, a participatory visioning exercise was conducted at Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) on 13th and 14th August, 2021 to prepare an agenda by adolescents to improve their access to health systems and delivery of health services. The purpose of conducting the visioning exercise is to increase the participation of adolescents in determining health service delivery and to suggest policy changes from the perspective of target group. Adolescents from five urban informal settlements, namely Chakkarpur, Sikanderpur, Nathupur, Ghata and Harijan Basti participated.

Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKS) was launched on 7 January 2014 to ensure universal coverage to adolescents in the age group of 10-14 years and 15-19 years. The scheme has provisions to enable establishment of Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHC) to cater to diverse needs of adolescents, to ensure comprehensive and equitable access to adolescent-specific health needs.

The participatory action research study, conducted in Gurugram, revealed poor health-seeking behaviour among adolescents. 91% of the adolescents, who participated in the survey lacked knowledge about AFHCs. Focus-Group Discussions with mothers revealed poor outreach on adolescent health from Frontline Health Workers (FLW).

Considering the Covid-19 pandemic situation that has impaired health systems and taking into account poor health-seeking behaviour among adolescents from low-income communities, living in informal settlements, it is imperative to explore ways in which adolescent participation and engagement with AFHCs can be increased and strengthened, so that more adolescents become aware as well as benefit from the services.

¹ This participatory research with adolescent boys and girls was conducted in 5 informal settlements (Harijan Basti, Chakkarpur, Ghata, Sikanderpur and Nathupur) in Gurugram city. The purpose of this research is to promote the use of participatory research methodology in the field of adolescent health.

© 2021 PRIA. The text may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes, provided credit is given to PRIA. To obtain permission for uses beyond those outlined in the Creative Commons license, please contact PRIA Library at library@pria.org. Please use the following citation:

PRIA (2021) City-level multi-stakeholder dialogue on strengthening facility-based intervention to target adolescent health



Knowledge. Voice. Democracy.

PRIA

Participatory Research in Asia

42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi-110062

Ph:+91-011-29960931/32/33

Web: www.pria.org