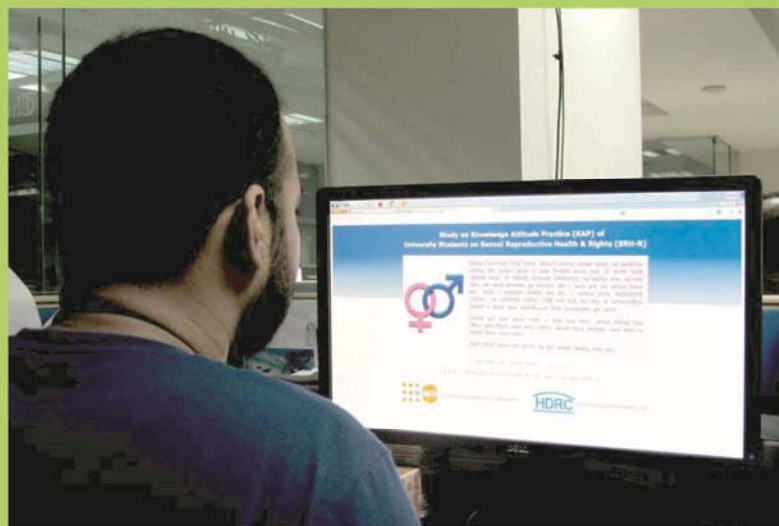


# Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) of University Students on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)



Prepared for



**United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**

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**Human Development Research Centre**

[www.hdrc-bd.com](http://www.hdrc-bd.com)

Dhaka: September 2013

*FINAL DRAFT*

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BDHS	Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DCI	Data Collection Instrument
ECP	Emergency Contraceptive Pill
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FP	Family Planning
GD	Group Discussion
HDRC	Human Development Research Centre
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IUD	Intrauterine Device
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice
KII	Key Informant Interview
MR	Menstrual Regulation
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PC	Personal Computer
SMS	Short Message Service
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UGC	University Grants Commission
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

In recent decades, rapid economic growth and modern communications along with globalization have caused immense changes in relation to sexual behavior and attitudes. For this reason, it is not unexpected that, current generation of young people of Bangladesh are not far away about knowing global sexual trends and sex related practices. However, sexual and reproductive health services have remained far away to meet the need of young population of our country's population. Without proper Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) knowledge, young generation is leaning into unprotected sex that has potential negative effects on their sexual reproductive health. In this perspective UNFPA has taken an initiative to conduct the study entitled 'Knowledge Attitude Practice (KAP) of university students on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)'.

### Objectives

Overall objective of the study was to conduct a *Knowledge-Attitude-Practice study among university students to examine their knowledge on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights with particular focus on sexuality, family planning, their attitudes towards it as well as their sexual and reproductive health related behavior.*

Specific objectives of the study were to explore:

- 1) Whether university students have adequate and correct understanding about SRHR
- 2) Perception/attitudes and behavior of the students about gender, sexuality, RH, and related information/service seeking behavior, and
- 3) Factors which act as barriers of unmarried students of utilizing available services, factors that encourage or discourage them to talk about this issue and also their views to overcome this situation.

### Methodology

The study is exploratory in nature. As the study subject is sensitive in nature and contains major ethical issues, it used innovative methodology with both quantitative and qualitative methods. It triangulated data from quantitative online web-based survey and information from qualitative surveys, namely *in-depth telephonic interview, focus group discussion, and key informant interview* during the analysis. The study conducted between December 2012 and September 2013, collected major data in July 2013.

The KAP study have been conducted among the students of two selected universities (1 public and 1 private) in Dhaka with 1,492 respondents (1,099 male, 393 female) in the online survey. In total, 303 female and 796 male students from public university, and 165 female and 228 male students from public university participated in the online survey. In addition, HDRC conducted telephonic interview with 15 male and female students each from private and 15 each from public university. Eight Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)- 4 with female (2 in public & 2 in private university) and 4 with male (2 in public & 2 in private university) unmarried university students were conducted. It conducted 10 KIIs with the *university authorities, student advisors, doctors at university health centre and campus journalists.*

### Background Characteristics of Students who Participated in the Survey

**Respondents in the Online Survey:** Respondents in the online survey are from different academic years. The mean age of the respondents is 21.9 years. Around four-fifths of the respondents are Muslim. More than nine-tenth respondents (91.4%) are unmarried.

**Respondents in In-depth Telephonic Interviews:** The mean age of the female respondents from public university is 22.9 years, which is 23.5 years in private university. The mean age of the male respondents from public university is 23.5 years, which is 24.7 years in private university. Most of the respondents of in-depth telephonic interviews are unmarried.

**Participants of the FGDs:** The mean age of the FGD participants by categories ranges between 21.9 years and 23.0 years. FGD participants are from different academic years.

### Gender, Masculinity and Femininity

Overall, the attitude of the university students on gender, masculinity, and femininity issues are on a positive side. However, their practices do not reflect the attitude on such issues. In spite of the fact, 19 percent of unmarried male students in the public university have had experience of sexual intercourse, more than three-fourths of them have expressed their agreement on the statement that ‘girls should remain virgin until they marry’. This dilemma is near to reality in the given context of Bangladesh with strong societal barrier towards permitting pre-marital sex, especially for girls. However, this type of dilemma, in many cases leads to gender-based violence and violation of sexual and reproductive health rights. It is also evident that economic well-being necessarily does not ensure higher gender-sensitive attitude. Other issues related to masculinity and femininity shows a mixed picture.

### Knowledge and Attitude about Contraceptive Methods

**Knowledge about regular contraceptive methods:** Most of the university students have some ideas about the regular contraceptive methods. Mostly, they are aware about *condom*, *oral pill*, and *Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP)*. However, it is interesting issues as to observe that irrespective of sex, knowledge about different contraceptive methods is lower among the private university students compared to those of the public universities. University students do not recognize condom’s *dual protection role* adequately. They mostly view it as only a contraceptive, but are not aware of its role in preventing the sexually transmitted infections.

**Knowledge about Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP):** Knowledge on Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP) is considerably higher among the private university students as compared to those of public irrespective of sex. Around 56 percent female students in public university know about ECP, which is around 64 percent among female students in private university. Around one-fourth of male students of the public university (26.8%) know about ECP, which is around 57 percent among male students of private university.

**Sources of knowledge about contraceptive methods:** According to the students - advertisement in televisions, advertisement and news at newspapers, and friends are the major sources of information about different contraceptive methods. Almost none of them report about university authority and/or parents as source of such information. Majority of the students have reported the television commercial on ECP as the source of knowledge. Findings are similar irrespective of sex of the students.

**Attitude about contraceptive methods:** In spite of the fact large proportion of students are aware of various contraceptive methods, many misconceptions still prevail among them. For an example, 41 percent female students in the public university stated their agreement on the statement that *birth control pill causes infertility*, which is 20 percent among female students in private university. This clearly indicates that there is information-gap among the university students about the contraceptive methods.

### Sexuality and Use of Contraceptive Methods

Most of the university students, irrespective of sex, discuss sexual issues with their friends of same sex. They often feel discomfort to discuss it even with their partner of opposite sex. A notable proportion of unmarried female students do not at all discuss it with anybody, while unmarried male students are more open.

The experience of sexual intercourse is there among the unmarried students. Among the males, 19 percent from public university and 32 percent from private university have experience of the same. Among the females, 14 percent from the public and 49 percent from the private university have this experience. Regarding partner for sexual intercourse, the females mostly reported boy friend (22.7% in private & 51.4% in public university), and the males mostly reported girl friend (36.2% in private & 77.8% in public university). Besides, 33 percent male students from public and 9 percent from private university reported sex workers as partner. A small proportion of the students are involved in homosexual relations.

In around four-fifths of cases, unmarried university students have reported using male condom during their last sexual intercourse. More than 70 percent sexually active unmarried students in private and 37 percent of those in public university reported using ECP frequently as contraceptive. It is noteworthy that in of majority cases, they take the decision of use of contraceptives mutually.

In spite of an apparently high rate of use of contraceptive method(s) among the students involved in sexual intercourse, the rate of unintended pregnancy is not negligible at all. Around 23 percent of the unmarried sexually active female students in public and 12 percent in private university had history of unwanted pregnancy. As expected, the unintended pregnancies mostly resulted in induced abortion or MR. In most of the cases the male partner claimed that he accompanied during induced abortion or MR, although the females did not report so.

### Knowledge and Attitude towards Maternal Health

**Knowledge of minimum number of Antenatal Care (ANC):** Around one-third (34.7%) female students in public and only 7.8 percent in private universities know about the minimum number of 4 medical checkups required during a pregnancy.

**Preferred place for delivery in case of pregnancy:** Majority of the students reported that the delivery should take place in a hospital. More than four-fifths (87.5%) of female students in public and 73 percent female students in private university think that the delivery of a woman should take place in a hospital. This rate is around 65.6 percent and 81 percent respectively among the male students of public and private universities.

### Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS

**Knowledge of symptoms of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs):** Knowledge of symptoms of STIs is not adequate among the university students. More than half (56.1%) female students in public and around one-fifth (21.6%) of those in private university do not do any symptom of STIs. Almost half (49.0%) of the male students in public and one-third (35.1%) of those private university also do not know any symptom of STIs.

**Service availed in case of suffering from STIs:** STIs cases are higher among the private university students (both male and female). About 8 percent female students from public and 32 percent from private university reported that they had STI. These rates are about 8 percent

and 25 percent respectively among male public and private university students. Those reported experienced STI, mostly went to public facilities for treatment. Almost none of those who went for such treatments are satisfied with the attitude of the service providers towards unmarried peoples.

**Knowledge about transmission of HIV/AIDS:** Knowledge of transmission of HIV/AIDS is somewhat satisfactory among university students. Most of the students are aware of the fact that, unprotected sexual intercourse or sharing syringe with HIV infected person results HIV transmission. More than half know that blood transfusion can transmit HIV.

### Menstrual Management

**Knowledge and sources of knowledge:** Almost all female university students know the advantages of using sanitary napkin and technique of use. Initially, they came to know it from their households, and later learnt it from friends, television commercials and newspapers.

**Attitude:** Almost no female students believe in traditional practices and taboos to maintain during menstruation. They are well aware of the importance of menstrual hygiene.

**Practice:** All female students expressed that they use sanitary napkins during their menstruation. They purchase it from local pharmacies and/or general stores and usually keep it in their handbags during menstrual period. However, they reported that university toilets are not friendly in maintaining menstrual hygiene (*the bin is not properly maintained, lack of water and soap, lack of adequate light, absence of tissue paper*).

Online survey results of set of major indicators				
Indicators	%			
	Female		Male	
	Public	Private	Public	Private
<b>Gender, masculinity, femininity</b>				
Agreement on the statement that <i>girls should remain virgin until they marry</i>	69	30.3	24	54
Agreement on the statement that <i>preferring male child over girl child is acceptable</i>	12.9	6	11	12.7
Have had involved in love, marriage, and/or sexual relationship	33.3	55.2	42.3	58.3
Agreement on the statement that <i>when I want sex I expect my partner to agree</i>	28.8	20.9	18.4	15.1
Agreement on the statement that <i>there are times, when woman deserves to be beaten</i>	9.3	16.9	34.2	21.5
<b>Knowledge and attitude about contraceptive methods</b>				
Do not know any method	2.6	6.7	0.9	5.7
Knowledge on ECP	56.1	63.6	26.8	56.6
Knowledge on both ECP and male condom	52.8	59.4	25.8	53.9
Agreement on the statement that <i>birth control pill causes infertility among women</i>	41.3	20	41.1	28.5
Agreement on the statement that <i>condom can prevent HIV/AIDS</i>	60.8	29.0	51.6	51.3
<b>Sexuality and use of contraceptive methods</b>				
Unmarried student who discuss sexual issues with friend of same sex	48.5	54.5	66.2	69.4
Unmarried students who have had experience of sexual intercourse	13.5	48.7	18.5	31.5
Unmarried students who used condom at the last sexual intercourse	71.4	88	85.9	85.5
Unmarried students who used both ECP condom at the last sexual intercourse	31.4	78.7	6.7	65.2
Unmarried students who decided use of contraceptive at last sexual intercourse mutually	54.3	80	61.5	81.2
<b>Knowledge and attitude about maternal health</b>				
Do not know nothing about ANC check ups	44.2	21.8	Not responded	
Hospital as preferred place for delivery	87.5	72.7	64.6	80.7
<b>STIs, HIV, and AIDS</b>				
Do not know about any symptom of STIs	56.1	20.6	49.0	35.1
Students reported of having STIs	8.0	32.1	7.7	19.2
Went to public health facility for treatment of STIs	42.3	95.0	57.1	86.2
Knowledge on the fact that re-use of syringe used by infected person can transmit HIV	89.1	64.2	50.1	79.4

## Recommendations

- **Publication and circulation of booklet:** Relevant agencies can initiate publication of a booklet on SRHR issues, which should be widely circulated among the students.
- **Orientation sessions for students:** University authorities should arrange regular informal sessions with the students on SRHR issues.
- **Creation of volunteer group among students to disseminate SRHR information through peer group approach:** Some students as volunteer can be trained on such issues to disseminate the knowledge to other students through *peer group approach*.
- **Sensitization programme targeted to the parents of adolescent and youth:** Specially designed sensitization/motivational initiatives needs designing targeting parents of adolescent and youth.
- **Ensuring SRHR services to the unmarried youth at all level of health facilities:** Provision of SRHR services to the unmarried youth at all level of health facilities (including *Government health facilities*) needs to be ensured. Policy level discussions need to be arranged for including the same in Government and NGO SRH services.
- **Ensuring professional counseling services for the unmarried youth on SRHR issues:** All universities should provide such facilities for its students ensuring anonymity of the service recipients.
- **Related medical facility at the university:** All universities need to be made well equipped with health centre, where SRHR related issues could be dealt properly.
- **Exclusive awareness building initiatives for male students:** Exclusive awareness building initiatives focusing the male-students should be designed.
- **Initiation of awareness campaign through media:** All the mainstream newspapers, television channels, and radio stations should be brought under a strong regulation where they should be printing/broadcasting SRHR related messages.
- **Display of billboard at the education institutes:** Billboard, containing messages on SRHR issues (using the expression and language that is used and understood by the youth population) needs display.
- **Formation of a 24-hour helpline cell:** Relevant agencies could initiate and popularize a *24-hour helpline* number on SRHR issues where students can phone and ask any questions where there will be no fear of identity disclosure.
- **Sending relevant messages through mobile phone:** Short messages containing SRHR information could be sent to mobile subscribes.
- **Awareness raising initiatives through web-based social network media:** Blogger communities can take active initiatives to create web-based platform on this topic. Facebook page could also be useful in this regard.
- **Orientation to the journalist:** The print and electronic media journalists (especially *university correspondents*) need orientation on this issue.
- **Dissemination of short films:** Short films on SRHR issue should be made and needs telecasting regularly through public and privately owned television channels.
- **Gender-sensitive infrastructure:** The infrastructural issues of the education institutes should be handled in a gender-sensitive manner
- **Strict regulation and monitoring over the herbal practitioners:** Herbal service providers on SRHR issues should be brought under strict regulation and monitoring,
- **Inclusion of SRHR issues in the textbooks at high school level:** At high school level, the curriculum should include SRHR issues.
- **Need for wider-scale survey based research:** A wider-scale research study needs to be initiated immediately.

