

Reshaping the Future

Regional Dialogue on Adolescent Pregnancy in South Asia

11th & 12th July 2024, Kathmandu, Nepal

Description on Travel:

In Kathmandu, Nepal, from July 11–12, 2024 ‘**Reshaping the Future: Regional Dialogue on Adolescent Pregnancy in South Asia**’ jointly organized by SAARC, World Health Organization, UNICEF and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Project Officer Noyon Kumar Gain from Praitrtran participated as the associate organization representative of Y-Moves project of Plan I International Bangladesh.

The event has greatly focused on countries ‘Adolescent Pregnancy: Policy and Program Updates, including recommendations, workshops, and group discussions on bottlenecks and recommendations on policy, services, data, and roles of SAARC. A clear set of recommendations were read out, followed by action planning and priority setting for each individual country. More work is awaited after going back home to make an improved and coordinated action plan.



First we have got an offer from the Plan International Bangladesh for attend the ‘**Reshaping the Future: Regional Dialogue on Adolescent Pregnancy in South Asia**’. The program venue was Kathmandu, Nepal. The journey was started in Dhaka on 09th and Noyon Kumar Gain and Yes Bangladesh youth representative Shahriar Shovon left for Nepal from Dhaka on 10th to representative of Y-Moves project and after the program on 13th they returned home. Plan International Bangladesh Country Director Kabita Bose participated in the programme. Also Bangladesh representatives of Ministry of Family Planning, Ministry of Health, UNFPA, UNICEF, WAS participated from Bangladesh.

Tour Objectives:

- *As a representative of Y-Moves in the regional dialogue on Adolescent pregnancy forum, I will present to others the overall data on Adolescent pregnancy in Bangladesh and how the Y-Moves project is working in this regard. How Y-Moves project is working with marginalized people on reproductive health and its success stories will be highlighted.*
- *As a representative of Y-Moves in the Regional Dialogue on Adolescent Pregnancy, I will give my opinion on how to prevent or reduce adolescent pregnancy in SAARC countries. I will come back and share the latest received information with the Y-Moves team on this matter which can bring the overall prosperity of the country.*

- *I will learn about how other countries present in the dialogue are mitigating the issue of Child marriage and Adolescent pregnancy work on how to implement it in Bangladesh.*
- *I will know about the implementation of SAARC action plan and share with the Y-Moves team for its proper implementation to prevent teenage Adolescent in Bangladesh.*

Object of the Regional Dialogue on Adolescent Pregnancy in South Asia:

- *Regional discrepancies in adolescent fertility rate remain pronounced in South Asia, both between and within countries.*
- *Adolescent fertility rates are especially high in Afghanistan (83 per 1,000) and Bangladesh (75 per 1,000) while lower in other countries (16 and 7 per 1,000 in Sri Lanka and the Maldives respectively).*

DAY- 1 (11.07.2024)

11th July 2024 at 8.30 am at Dusit Princess, Kathmandu, Nepal **‘Reshaping the Future: Regional Dialogue on Adolescent Pregnancy in South Asia’** begins by Registration.

9.00-9.30: The program starts with the biography of the Nepali Adolescent Girls champion: Shyam Kumari Ram. Members of the Executive Committee of the SAARC Adolescent Pregnancy Forum in South Asia opened the meeting live and online with a welcome address and also outlined the goals and objectives of the Regional Dialogue on Adolescent Pregnancy Forum by Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar, Secretary General, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation; Ministry of Health, Government of Nepal; Sanjay Wijesekera, Regional Director, UNICEF South Asia; Video message by Saima Wazed, Regional Director, WHO South East Asia Regional Office; Dr. Aleksandar Sasha Bodiroza, Deputy Regional Director, UNFPA Asia Pacific Regional Office (virtual)



9.30-10.30: Data on adolescent pregnancy and mortality due to adolescent pregnancy, adolescent health care utilization rates across the world are presented in Power Point presentation. MCS SDG Target 2030 is presented to what extent has been implemented so far and how much is unrealized. At the end of the presentation, the question and answer session asked questions from the attendees on various topics.

10.45-11.45: During the presentation of the latest update on regional child marriage and Adolescent pregnancy in South Asia, it was seen that the amount of child marriage during the Corona period exceeded all previous records, which is now much lower than before. Bangladesh and Afghanistan have the highest rates of child marriage. Bhutan, Nepal and Maldives are currently doing well. Regional best practices for preventing child marriage and Adolescent pregnancy in South Asia Argentina's are shared.

2.00-3.00: Representatives of **Afghanistan** and **Pakistan** presented country updates of their respective countries.

Afghanistan's presentation was-	Pakistan's presentation was-was-
<p>The situation of adolescent pregnancy/births</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographics • Issues Affecting Adolescents in Afghanistan • Who is at the highest risk? • Child marriage, adolescent birth rate and neonatal mortality rate • Contributing factors of poor health outcomes <p>Key determinants of adolescent pregnancy/births</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproductive health: Fertility <p>Key barriers to reaching pregnant adolescents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal health: Coverage Of Antenatal Care (ANC) • U-Report surveys <p>Enabling Environment – Policy, programme, data and monitoring frameworks</p> <p>Challenges and Constraints</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, strategy and guidelines • Data, evidence and KM • Service delivery and community health • SBCC, enabling environment, and partnership 	<p>The situation of adolescent pregnancy/births</p> <p>Relevant policies and programme guidelines</p> <p>Progress in prevention and care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy • Programme <p>Enabling environment – Policy & programme</p> <p>Challenges and constraints</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multisectoral policy and programme recommendations • Health sector policy recommendations • Health sector programme recommendations

The representatives of **Afghanistan** and **Pakistan** presented country updates of their respective countries, followed by question-and-answer sessions and various recommendations from the audience.

3.00-4.00: Representatives of **Bhutan** and **India** presented country updates of their respective countries.

Bhutan's presentation was-	India's presentation was-
Socio-demographic profile of adolescents The situation of adolescent pregnancy/births Key barriers reaching pregnant adolescent Evidenced-based Interventions and Programs Enabling environment Challenges and Constraints Policy and Programme Recommendations Way forward	The situation of adolescent pregnancy/births Child Marriage burden Co-relation between early marriage and teenage pregnancy Experience of violence during pregnancy Declining trends of adolescent pregnancy and fertility rate Declining trends of child marriage in India <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key determinants of adolescent pregnancy/births • Enabling Environment – Policy and programme • Challenges and Constraints • Recommendations

The representatives of **Bhutan** and **India** gave their respective country updates after presenting questions and answers and various recommendations from the audience.

4.15-5.15: Representatives of **Maldives** and **Nepal** presented country updates of their respective countries.

Maldives' presentation was-	Nepal's presentation was-
Introduction The situation of adolescent pregnancy/births Key determinants of adolescent pregnancy/births Policies and guidelines Progress in prevention and care Enabling environment Challenges and constraints Recommendations	The situation of adolescent pregnancy/births Key determinants of adolescent pregnancy Policies and guidelines on adolescent pregnancy Progress in prevention and care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Policy ■ Programme Enabling environment – Policy & programme Challenges and constraints Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Policy ■ Programme Case studies

The representatives of **Maldives** and **Nepal** gave their respective country updates after presenting questions and answers and various recommendations from the audience.

At the end of the day, a group photo session was organized.

6.00-8.00: Welcome Reception concludes the program as per the schedule of the first day.

DAY- 2 (12.07.2024)

8.30-9.00: The previous day's agenda was briefly reviewed and Nepali Adolescent Champion Dil Kumari Chepong presented her life's struggle and survival.

9.00-9.45: The representatives of **Bangladesh** and **Sri Lanka** presented country updates of their respective countries.

Bangladesh's presentation was-	Sri Lanka's presentation was-
<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population and demography • Health care system <p>The situation of adolescent pregnancy/births</p> <p>Key determinants of adolescent pregnancy</p> <p>Policies and guidelines</p> <p>Progress in prevention and care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy • Programme • Progress on key indicators <p>Enabling environment – Policy & programme</p> <p>Challenges and constraints</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy • Programme 	<p>The situation of adolescent pregnancy/births</p> <p>Key determinants of adolescent pregnancy/births</p> <p>Policies and guidelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law • Policies • Programmes & Guidelines • Training packages • Other main ASRH initiatives • Age- appropriate SRH education <p>Progress in prevention and care</p> <p>■ Policy ■ Programme</p> <p>Enabling environment – Policy and programme</p> <p>Challenges and constraints</p> <p>Recommendations</p> <p>■ Policy ■ Programme</p> <p>Way forward</p>

After presenting the country updates of **Bangladesh** and **Sri Lanka**, the representatives of **Bangladesh** and **Sri Lanka** gave question answers and various recommendations from the audience.

9.45-10.00: Regional reflections on Country Commonalities & Key Recommendations were presented after the presentation of the 8 country updates.

- 10.00-3.30:** All the present participants were divided into 4 groups for group discourse-
- Group 1 – Policy and Enabling Environment
 - Group 2 – SBC and Access to Information
 - Group 3 – Access to Quality and Respectful Services
 - Group 4 – Data and Information



Group 1 – Policy and Enabling Environment

- Barriers and Bottlenecks
- Recommended Interventions

Group Presentation and Discussion

Group 2 – SBC and Access to Information

- Barriers and Bottlenecks
- Recommended Interventions

Group Presentation and Discussion

Group 3 – Access to Quality and Respectful Services

- Barriers and Bottlenecks
- Recommended Interventions

Group Presentation and Discussion

Group 4 – Data and Information

- Barriers and Bottlenecks
- Recommended Interventions



3.30-4.30: Reshaping the future: Country prioritization - and Action Plans are developed based on country groups. Md.Shamsul Hoque, Programme Manager, Adolescent & School Health DGHS, MoHFW led the team of Bangladesh group in making the action plan. An action plan is prepared on what steps Bangladesh will take to prevent adolescent pregnancy and child marriage by the year 2030, what methods and programs will be implemented, and through whom it will be implemented.



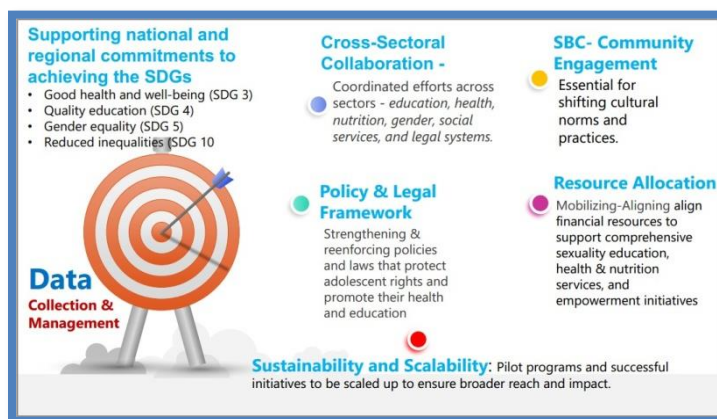
4.30-5.00: Country wise action plans are presented and after that various recommendations are presented to everyone.



5.00-5.15: At the end of ‘Reshaping the Future: Regional Dialogue on Adolescent Pregnancy in South Asia’ Ms. Shahiya Ali Manik, Director, Social Affairs, SAARC Secretariat and Ms Vero Njikhoo - Regional Gender Advisor, UNICEF South Asia thanked everyone for their spontaneous participation in this 2-day workshop and urged everyone to work together to prevent child pregnancy and child marriage within the regional SDG 2030. The entire program was conducted by Ms. Shivane Thapa.

Key Take-Away:

- Address **patriarchal social norms** - reshape approaches addressing gender norms that contribute to adolescent pregnancy.
- A shift from **Adolescent friendly to Adolescent Responsive Services**
- **Education is key** – promote girls’ education including for married/pregnant and parenting adolescents.
- **Boys and men** – bring adolescent boys to the table, support to young fathers and involve male partners.
- **Climate change is associated with early marriages** – position it is key for SAR.
- **Age appropriate and accurate information** is important.
- **Data and Evidence** - Improve the capture of data, desegregation (adolescent specific indicators – WHO developed 47)
- **Enhance national systems, strengthen community data systems**, employ innovative ways like U-Report, invest in measuring impact of whether adolescent initiatives are working or not.
- **Diversify adolescent engagement platforms and referrals.**
- **Comprehensive and multisectoral services** – Providing services goes beyond healthcare settings, strengthen referral systems for pregnant and parenting adolescent girls, include childcare and parenting support.
- **Private sector engagement** – **position private sector as a key stakeholder** within the agenda
- **Learning from others** –**enhance knowledge management/sharing** and cross-country learning (SAARC as lead) – province/state to province/state learning.
- **Policy & Legal frameworks** - minimum marriage age, education of pregnant and parenting girls, SRHR services and information etc.



- Adolescent birth poses a significant roadblock to South Asia's progress towards SDGs. Expanding access to quality and respectful care for pregnant and parenting adolescents is key to the region achieving the SDGs
- Adolescent pregnancy is not only a health issue, but a rights issue that requires actions by multiple sectors and actors.
- With the vast majorities of adolescent pregnancies occurring in the context of child marriage, successful efforts to address adolescent require strategies that reduce child marriage, empower girls, and take into account the sociocultural factors driving this harmful practice.
- Life skills based education and age-appropriate and accurate reproductive health information is important.

My learning and sharing after learning from Regional Dialogue:

- ❖ The rate of child marriage is much higher in Bangladesh than other countries in the South Asia region, which needs to be curbed very quickly.
- ❖ Prevention of adolescent pregnancy, maternal and child mortality.
- ❖ Inclusion of CSE subject in the community and in secondary and higher secondary education.
- ❖ Community-based and school-based approach and platforms to provide age appropriate, accurate, gender sensitive and inclusive (including LGBTQ+ community, persons with disabilities) information to adolescent girls and boys.
- ❖ There is a lack of adequate data in a proper manner In Bangladesh there is no basis for any information without proper data. In that case, we need to collecting accurate data.

Preparations:

- Prepare passport and fill online visa application.
- Plan International's Gender Policy, Safeguarding Policy, PESHHA Policy and Code of Conduct are read and signed and sent to the Plan International Y-Moves team.
- On 09th at 9.30 am to 11.00 am, PIB Safeguarding Specialist Rezanul Haque gave Safeguarding Orientation in Microsoft Teams online organized by Plan International Bangladesh.
- Collection of NOC/testimonial from Parittran.
- Dollar endorsement.
- Air ticket confirmation.
- Advance Requisitioning and Advance Acceptance on Parittran.

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