

4th cycle of Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

Child Health

September 2018-June 2023



Issues Covered

Adolescent Health, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), Mental Health, Effective Monitoring, Implementation, Awareness.

Recommending States

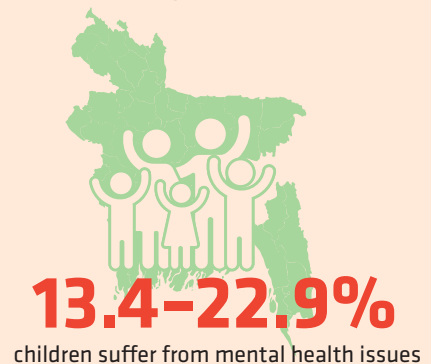
Recommendation Nos. 147.123 (Holy See); 147.124 (Plurinational State of Bolivia)

Situation Analysis

The findings of the “Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2019” (24 Feb 2020, Dhaka Tribune) conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and UNICEF say, Bangladesh has made significant strides in the areas of water, education, health, child protection, nutrition, sanitation, and hygiene. The National Adolescent Health Strategy 2017–2030 has been developed using a participatory process, with active participation and contributions from the key stakeholder groups. However, there lacks effective monitoring at community-level health service centres especially in remote areas.

‘Adolescent Health’ (AH) is a key agenda for the government, a newer approach called Adolescent Friendly Health Services (AFHS) (*National Strategy for Adolescent Health 2017-30*) is being implemented all over the country through the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). But there is a lack of awareness regarding AFHS among adolescents and parents, furthermore, existing stigma around SRHR services for unmarried adolescents and as a result, a large fraction of adolescents are not being able to access AFHS .

In Bangladesh, 13.4–22.9% of children suffer from mental health issues (*National Mental Health Strategic Plan 2020-30*). The closure of schools across the country due to COVID-19 for around ten months has kept millions of children confined to their homes and away from their peers, resulting in a lack of outdoor sports opportunities and causing them to feel social isolation, boredom, and stress. All of this may lead to increased anxiety and depression lasting for years. Despite enacting the Mental Health Act in 2018, there has been poor implementation due to a lack of awareness about the law.



National Framework

Legal Framework	Policy Framework
The Constitution of the Peoples’ Republic of Bangladesh	National Children Policy 2011
The Children Act 2013	National Adolescent Health Strategy 2017–2030
The Child Marriage Restraint Act 2017	National Action Plan to End Child Marriage 2018–2030
The Mental Health Act 2018	National Mental Health Strategic Plan 2020–2030

Challenges

Lack of monitoring

Access to Adolescent Friendly Health Services (AFHS)

Lack of awareness regarding mental health issues

Impact

There is a lack of effective monitoring at community-level health service centres especially in remote areas.

Inadequate awareness regarding accessing AFHS among adolescents and parents, furthermore, the existing stigma around SRH services for unmarried adolescents makes it less accessible for them.

The COVID-19 and subsequent closure of all educational and recreational institutions led to increased anxiety and depression among children. Moreover, despite enacting the Mental Health Act in 2018, there implementation of the Act is low due to a lack of awareness about the law.

Questions

What initiatives has the government taken to monitor the implementation of the National Adolescent Health Strategy 2017–2030?

What strategies has the government taken to raise awareness among community members, including parents, teachers, SMCs, and religious leaders, regarding the importance of SRHR for children and adolescents?

What steps has the government taken to make the Adolescent Friendly Health Services more inclusive and accessible for children from all intersections, especially for those with disabilities, intersex, Dalit, street children and children from ethnic minority communities?

What steps have been taken by the government to ensure the proper implementation of the Mental Health Act 2018?

Recommendations

1. Monitor the implementation of the National Adolescent Health Strategy 2017–2030.
2. Raise awareness among community members, including parents, teachers, SMCs, and religious leaders, regarding the importance of SRHR for children and adolescents.
3. Promote positive narratives against stigmatisation against SRHR for all children.
4. Take initiatives and invest more in Adolescent Friendly Health Services to make this system more inclusive and accessible for children from all intersections, especially those with disabilities, intersex, Dalit, street children and children from ethnic minority communities.
5. Ensure the proper implementation of the Mental Health Act 2018.

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