Current situation and needs of adolescent nutrition services in hard-to-reach areas of Bangladesh

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Abstract

This study examined the situation of existing adolescent nutrition services and needs of the service providers and recipients in hard-to-reach areas of Bangladesh. This cross-sectional study has used a mixed method approach where quantitative data were collected by face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KII) and observations were conducted to assess the needs as qualitative component. Adolescent nutrition services and interventions are mostly directed to girls’ leaving the adolescent boys bereft of the advantages of interventions. 71% of adolescent girls sought nutrition services from government health facilities whereas no boys were found receiving any nutrition services from any kind of facilities. Nutrient supplementation coverage was found higher in the coastal areas though utilization of behaviour change communication (BCC) materials while counseling was nil at all. The ceaseless demands for regular supply of nutrients, logistics and increasing skilled manpower at the field level were strongly uttered by both healthcare providers and recipients. Community nutrition clubs and improving school based nutrition services can play significant role in this regard

Background

- Nutrition is very crucial during adolescence as the human body undergoes both physical and psychological transition.
- Knowing the situation of nutrition services along with the prevailing needs is important to fight against malnutrition of Bangladesh, especially in the hard-to-reach areas.

Methods

- Study design: Cross-sectional study design where both quantitative and qualitative approaches were applied.
- Study period: February to September, 2018
- Study site: 15 upazilas spreading over 12 districts of hard-to-reach areas: haor, char (alluvial lands), islands, hilly and coastal areas.
- Data collection methods:
  - Situation analysis was largely dependent on quantitative data collection by face-to-face interviews from 293 adolescents and observations in 29 govt. health facilities.
  - Qualitative methods like FGDs, KII were applied for appraise the needs assessment.

Conclusion

Community clubs, improving school-based adolescent nutrition services, regular supply of logistics and nutrients along with increasing training sessions for healthcare providers can augment ensuring better nutrition services for adolescent boys and girls.