

**Intervention Research on Reproductive Health of
Married Adolescents: Results from a Pilot Study in Maharashtra, India
Institute of Health Management, Pachod (IHMP)**

Making Married Adolescents Matter

Background NFHS-3, 2006 data indicates that 45 % girls (20-24 yrs) in India are married before 18 years. The prevalence of early marriage is 48.9 % in rural and 28.9 % in urban Maharashtra (NFHS-3, 2006). The age specific fertility rate in 15-19 yr. age group is higher in Maharashtra than the all India rate. The early reproductive debut of married adolescent girls (MAGs) results in a host of adverse health outcomes.

Research Setting 50 villages & 27 urban slums in Maharashtra.

Research Objective

To test the efficacy of an intervention to improve the sexual & reproductive health of married adolescent girls.

Research Questions

To study impact of the intervention on:

- ♦ Average age at first conception.
- ♦ Contraceptive use
- ♦ Proportion of low birth weight babies
- ♦ Treatment seeking for RTIs
- ♦ Treatment seeking for post-natal complications

Quasi-experimental study design

Rural Site (50 villages)			
Intervention	O _____	X _____	O _____
n =	824		300
Control	_____		O _____
n =			400
Urban Site (27 slums)			
Intervention	O _____	X _____	O _____
n =	314		289

Three Key Components of the Intervention

1. Community-based surveillance system
2. Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) for creating a demand for services and generating behaviour change at individual and household levels.
3. Primary level care and referral services

Worker	Level	Functions
Community Health Worker	Household	Surveillance Early Detection Registration Referral ; BCC
Supervisor / ANM	Community	Supervision BCC ANC / PNC BCC -Group
PHC	Community	Pregnancy kits ANC / PNC Abortion care RTI Treatment Couple Wksp.

Sample Description

The baseline study was conducted in 2003 and the endline in 2006. A random selection of married girls aged 12-19 years were interviewed across both urban and rural sites.

Baseline Characteristics	Urban	Rural
Education		
Up to middle school	29.0 %	26.7 %
Secondary +	71.0 %	73.3 %
Occupation		
Working	6.0 %	78.7 %
Joint families	74.8 %	89.9 %
Median age at marriage	15.0 yrs	16.0yrs
n	314	824

Socio-demographic indicators did not vary significantly between baseline and endline.