India’s future growth and prosperity relies on the healthy and productive contributions of the nation’s vibrant youth.

Meeting youth’s sexual and reproductive health needs can preserve their health and boost our economy.

Economic productivity in India would increase by more than INR 508.2 trillion if young girls could wait until their early twenties to begin having children.²

Youth lack awareness of sexual and reproductive health and face barriers when they try to access sexual and reproductive health information and services:

1. Stigma
2. Provider judgment
3. Lack of privacy and confidentiality
4. Moral policing

Youth desire sexual and reproductive health information and services:

- 20% of young married women desire to limit or space pregnancy but are not using contraception.³
- Only 20% of sexually active young women are currently using a modern contraceptive method.
- 10% of young people report having a sexually transmitted infection.
National policies prioritize youth’s health needs.

The National Youth Policy 2014 sets an objective to: “Develop a strong and healthy generation equipped to take on future challenges.”

The National Health Policy 2017 recognizes the importance of health in schools by: “Incorporating health education as part of the curriculum, promoting hygiene and safe health practices within the school environs, and by acting as a site of primary health care.”

What can you do?

1. Teach youth about sexual and reproductive health and rights, menstrual hygiene, and gender equality, and provide safe spaces for discussion.

2. Ensure sexual and reproductive health services are youth-friendly:
   - Train service providers to offer counseling and services to youth with dignity and respect, and provide appropriate information.
   - Mandate that services are confidential and ensure privacy.
   - Make available a wide range of appropriate options, including long-acting reversible contraceptive methods.

3. Create a referral system that connects youth with sexual and reproductive health services in health care facilities.

Sources

