

Youth Declaration on ensuring Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)

Background

Bangladesh has a population of more than 32 million adolescents (UNICEF, 2017). Adolescence is a very challenging period for any human being, as this is the time when a person undergoes tremendous physical and mental changes. It is essential for the adolescents to have access to authentic and scientific information and evidence that will make them aware of their bodies, especially their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). Moreover, that information plays a vital role for mental growth.

In Bangladesh National Adolescent Strategy 2017-2030 ([NAS](#)) indicates that adolescent girls learn about menstruation from their older female family members. However, the NAS doesn't describe how, for instance, through Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in schools. Moreover, there is an existing CSE platform informally who works closely with the National Committee TextBooks (NCTB) and the potential stakeholders, but mostly the stakeholders are working according to the project based and project oriented objectives.

Another set of information shows that such information exposes the girls to health risks and social stigmatization. This could affect their mental health. Boys seem to get information about their body changes mainly from friends and peers. Some of them often find information about sexuality at porno sites. This could result in misconceptions, wrong expectations and in risky sexual behaviour. Therefore quality information about SRHR to adolescents is extremely important. In Bangladesh for quite some years the government and NGO's are active to get adolescents well informed about SRHR.

Studies have also shown that comprehensive sexuality education contributes to building communication, negotiation and relationship skills, and positive gender attitudes – which not only impacts SRH but also on mental health (National Strategy for Adolescent Health, 2017 - 2030)¹. We could distinguish information provision to adolescents in school and out of school and observe that providing quality and appropriate information through Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) has a positive impact on the improved SRH among adolescents (UNESCO, 2015). Therefore in this research we will first focus on CSE as a way to provide quality information on SRHR to in-school-adolescents including what they want, how they are adapting the situations, how they are having the

¹ [National-Strategy-for-Adolescent-Health-2017-2030.pdf](#)

information in the educational institutions. In our recommendations we will also try to include how to provide quality information on SRHR to out- of- school- adolescents.

The National Adolescent Strategy (NAS) that was finalized and started to be implemented in 2017 does not address comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in spite of talking about SRHR for adolescents. Ensuring SRHR for adolescents will be incomplete without incorporating CSE in schools and educational institutions which is in accordance with international standards and adapted to the context of Bangladesh.. Many experiences are reported and many materials have been developed so far.

A proper mapping was taken place to be able to know what works (effectively and efficiently) and whatnot regarding CSE programs taken by Government, NGOs, INGOs, and academic platforms. SERAC-Bangladesh has taken the initiative to conduct a comprehensive mapping with the technical assistance of Share-net Bangladesh with the aim to accomplish a mapping exercise where CSE related programs/activities that have been implemented and proposed within the country will be mapped. The assumption is that this could build a stronger CSE movement to facilitate the policy reform process to include comprehensive information on SRHR in school textbooks.

Keeping this context in consideration the **objectives of the research study would be-**

1. To identify and mapping of CSE related activities, advocacy interventions and advocacy done from 2011 till 2022 in Bangladesh. as well as to compile all existing data, factsheets and any other relevant materials on CSE.
2. To recommend a way forward and strategic plan of consolidated advocacy on CSE and accelerate the existing CSE platform and formalize the CSE platform officially in the SRHR Knowledge Fair 2022 of Bangladesh by adopting and understanding the latest curriculum of the National Committee of TextBooks on CSE as well as comparing it with the revised guideline on CSE from UNESCO's ["International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education 2018"](#).

The following three steps were carried out:

1. A Youth consultation meeting was held by engaging 30 youth experts to identify program experiences, existing challenges, followed by recommendations under multiple NGO/INGOs interventions

2. 7 In-depth interviews of expert SRH/CSE Stakeholders on program and advocacy interventions were carried out and evidence based research and social and behavior change and communication (SBCC) materials were collected.
3. A draft youth declaration was composed by engaging a youth and expert panel of SRH/CSE stakeholders, which will be presented at the SRHR Knowledge Fair 2022

Coordinating with CSE programs & Action

Youth Declaration on CSE 1

CSE contents must be integrated into the primary grades/class according to the age needs, it will help the adolescents not to have a wrong pathway, and through this, peers can have conversation and discussion for mutual understanding

Youth Declaration on CSE 2

CSE pre-counseling must be introduced in the school and development programs effectively. Additionally, Tool free tele-counseling could be a better option as there will be a chance for the service takers to talk anonymously.

Youth Declaration on CSE 3

Students must be well oriented on human body and psycho-social counseling, especially the reproductive organs as a part of sexuality education; more discussion on sexual and reproductive health through formal and non-formal program, workshop, training programs; which pose a positive impact around CSE and ensure a safe space for the adolescents to discuss openly in the classroom

Youth Declaration on CSE 4

To add value for eradicating the social bias on several grounds including the effect of socioeconomic status among families, gender roles, service providers' favoritism, and ignorance of a certain group

Program Design, management & assessment

Youth Declaration on CSE 5

Determine and map the current policies, projects, and programs that deal with adolescent issues generally by region, the sociodemographic of the recipients, and the outcomes and results from these programs as well as support capacity development, supportive supervision, educative program, coordination, & other planning and management functions regarding CSE

Youth Declaration on CSE 6

To develop knowledge of client and gatekeepers on acceptance of, and support for youth-friendly CSE where stakeholders contribute unique skill sets or resources to strengthen the partnership

Youth Declaration on CSE 7

Program design needs to be focused on longer-term successes and sustainability being prepared for changes and failures by adapting the scaling-up plan

Youth Declaration on CSE 8

Research techniques or such trials have to be carried out for exhaustive effect assessments with a proper monitoring process. Evaluation of program outcomes measures accomplishments, such as alterations in participants' knowledge, attitudes, and abilities. Impact evaluation looks at longer-term successes that shall be connected to a specific program.

Training & supporting CSE teachers

Youth Declaration on CSE 9

Teachers' attitudes & readiness to deliver a curriculum and create CSE friendly classroom environment for effective teaching and learning where teachers must balance the diversity of ideas, opinions, & lived experiences; presented in classrooms with their learned experiences, values, and belief systems

Youth Declaration on CSE 10

To aid students, pre-service teachers & family in internalizing the requisite information and abilities, teachers/educators need to be trained to use participatory approaches on the usage of CSE material, instructional strategies, abilities, attitudes, and behaviors that put them an overwhelming confidence

Youth Declaration on CSE 11

Reviewing the curriculum's material and a teacher's strengths, localized language, and flaws on a regular basis is necessary to assess a program's performance and effectiveness by utilizing advocacy tools. Even to integrate the diversified and marginalized people's rights & information in the curriculum/program.

Youth Declaration on CSE 12

Organizations, schools, and departments of education should budget for teacher training and take into account hybrid (in-person and online) approaches as cost-cutting measures and

assuring the accessibility to the right technology since teachers may attempt to update their knowledge of CSE and participate in online courses to better their professional development

Engaging the community

Youth Declaration on CSE 13

Targeting parents through community-based activities, community radios, or identifying/inviting them to join through specialized techniques, & sensitization programs to create & present CSE lessons with some hand in hand CSE

Youth Declaration on CSE 14

Enough consensus are available that influences the mass media on sexual development by incorporating critical media analysis in CSE curriculum and programs. So ensuring the right based information on sexuality and sexual health must be accessible in contemporary media, particularly on smart phones and the Internet through the help of ICT devision

Youth Declaration on CSE 15

Journalists and other media professionals have the power to focus on discourse information & should stand against clickbait headlines, media and media professionals should be more sensitized about CSE.

Youth Declaration on CSE 16

Strengthen referral networks with religiously affiliated healthcare organizations as well as Faith-based groups with a significant amount of both health care and education. Important components including exchanging best practices and working together to advocate for better health care for young people through faith based groups or alliances, are being introduced.