

Reproductive Health

Reproductive Health

- You have already studied the human reproductive system and its functions in Chapter 2.
- Now, let us explore a closely related concept — **Reproductive Health**.

Definition of Reproductive Health

- At a basic level, reproductive health refers to having healthy reproductive organs that function normally.
- However, the concept extends beyond just physical health.
- It includes:
 - Emotional
 - Behavioral
 - Social well-being related to reproduction.

WHO Definition

- According to the World Health Organization (**WHO**):
- Reproductive health means a state of complete physical, emotional, behavioural, and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system and its functions.

What Constitutes a Reproductively Healthy Society?

- A reproductively healthy society is one where:
 - Individuals have physically and functionally normal reproductive organs.
 - There is a presence of healthy emotional and behavioural interactions among individuals in all **sex-related aspects**.

Significance of Reproductive Health

- Maintaining reproductive health is crucial because it:
 - Promotes overall well-being.
 - Helps in preventing reproductive diseases.
 - Encourages responsible sexual behaviour.
 - Ensures safe motherhood and healthy offspring.

Approaches to Achieve Reproductive Health

- Various methods and strategies are adopted to ensure reproductive health in society, including:

- Awareness programs
- Sex education
- Access to healthcare services
- Family planning
- Prevention and management of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)

Reproductive Health – Problems and Strategies

Introduction

- India was among the first countries to launch national-level programmes for achieving total reproductive health as a social goal.
- The **Family Planning Programme**, launched in **1951**, was the starting point.
- Over time, these programmes have evolved to cover broader aspects of reproductive health.

Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Programmes

- To expand the scope of reproductive care, the government introduced improved initiatives under the banner of the Reproductive and Child Health Care (**RCH**) Programme.

Key Objectives of RCH:

- Spreading awareness on reproductive health.
- Providing healthcare facilities to build a reproductively healthy society.
- Offering support for family welfare and maternal-child health.

Role of Education and Awareness

A. Media and Community Involvement

- Both governmental and non-governmental agencies have used **print and electronic media** to create awareness about reproductive health.
- Family members, teachers, and peers also play a vital role in educating young people. Offering support for family welfare and maternal-child health.

B. Importance of Sex Education in Schools

- Sex education should be promoted in schools to:
 - Provide accurate knowledge about reproductive organs and adolescence.
 - Correct myths and misconceptions related to sex.
 - Promote safe and hygienic sexual practices.
 - Raise awareness of **STDs** and **HIV/AIDS**.
- This helps adolescents make informed, responsible choices and maintain good reproductive health.

Family Planning and Parental Care

- Educating couples and individuals in the marriageable age group is essential.
- Key focus areas include:
 - Various birth control methods and contraception.

- Pregnancy care and post-natal care of both mother and child.
- Importance of breastfeeding for infant health.
- Promoting gender equality and valuing both male and female children.
- Such awareness leads to socially responsible families of desirable size and overall family well-being.

Addressing Social Issues

- To promote a healthy reproductive society, it's vital to address:
 - Uncontrolled population growth.
 - Sexual abuse and sex-related crimes.
 - Discrimination based on gender.
- Awareness about these social evils helps people act responsibly and build a safe, healthy, and just society.

Medical Infrastructure and Services

- Successful implementation of reproductive health strategies depends on:
 - Strong healthcare infrastructure.
 - Availability of trained professionals.
 - Access to medical care for issues like:
 - Pregnancy and childbirth,
 - Menstrual disorders,
 - Infertility,
 - Abortions,
 - STDs and HIV,
 - Contraceptive use.

Legal and Technological Measures

- Important Initiatives:
 - Statutory ban on amniocentesis for sex determination to prevent female foeticide.
 - Massive child immunization programmes.
 - Maternal and child health schemes.
- **Amniocentesis** is a diagnostic test in which a sample of amniotic fluid is taken to detect genetic disorders such as Down syndrome, haemophilia, and sickle cell anaemia, and to assess fetal health.
- However, its misuse for sex determination is banned in India.

Research and Innovation

- Continuous scientific research is supported by both government and NGOs to:
 - Develop new contraceptive methods,
 - Improve existing reproductive health technologies.
- A notable development is ‘**Saheli**’, a non-steroidal oral contraceptive pill for women, developed by the Central Drug Research Institute (CDRI), Lucknow.
- It is a significant milestone in female contraceptive options in India.

Indicators of Improved Reproductive Health

- The following are signs of progress in reproductive health in India:
 - Greater public awareness about sex and reproduction.
 - Increased medically supervised deliveries.
 - Better post-natal care for mothers and infants.
 - Reduced maternal and infant mortality rates.
 - More couples opting for small families.
 - Improved diagnosis and treatment of STDs.
 - Enhanced medical facilities for reproductive and sexual health.



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