



Dr. R. D. Pandit

Foreword

Adolescence is that period in a young girl's life which heralds a change - Not quite a little girl, not quite a young woman. Though WHO considers adolescence as period between 10 to 20 years, the physical and emotional changes that are supposed to take place at this time start much earlier and continue to a much later age.

At this age the girls may be confused, afraid to ask about the changes taking place, may wonder what is happening, and do not know where to turn to for correct information, guidance and advice.

We are aware that 10 to 15% of our population is of growing adolescents. It is only recently that we have acknowledged the need for a separate speciality for Adolescents to handle their Medical, Social, Psychological, Sexual problems or ailments, whether it is their menstrual disorder, contraceptive advice, pregnancy/abortion counselling, or the more serious matter of malignancy. They need to be heard and understood patiently by a nonjudgemental professional and be given friendly practical advice.

If we expect the adolescents to come to us with their problems, we as health professionals should see that they are empowered with knowledge.

It is the sole duty of the Government either Central or State, Municipal Corporations, Gram Panchyats etc., to see that there is universal education, both for boys and

girls. Society somehow should remove the gender bias entirely. With education, and enlightenment of the girl child, empowerment would automatically come easily to the adolescent girl and subsequently to the women in general.

It is also the responsibility of the parents, teachers, social workers, politicians and administrators and personnel of the medical and paramedical profession, to see that the girl child gets her legitimate due of education and empowerment, and the change over from the adolescent girl to the adult women is smooth and streamlined with nil or least medical, social or psychological problems.

Because of the neglect of the Adolescent girl all these years, our FOGSI President Dr. Mehroo Hansotia thought fit to declare the year 1999 as the FOGSI year of the Adolescent girl and the theme given was Education and Empowerment. In order to highlight the various problems faced by the Adolescent Girl, it was also decided to publish the October 1999 issue of our journal as a special issue entitled Adolescent Girl.

We are thankful to all the contributors to this issue for giving us valuable information in their respective articles, which I am sure will immensely benefit our FOGSI members, and other readers of our journal.

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Editor