

Reproductive health: RHIYA project successful

By A Staff Reporter
LALITPUR, Jan. 29: Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in Asia (RHIYA) Programme in Nepal disseminated its final report on Monday.

The RHIYA project in Nepal aims to empower adolescent and youths aged 10 to 24 with life skills and appropriate information and education on sexual and reproductive health issues. Information was collected from adolescents and youths of both sexes between 10 to 24 using the same instruments utilised in the baseline survey with some revisions.

The European Union (EU) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) launched and implemented the RHIYA Programme in Nepal from 2003 to 2006.

A total of 2,720 households were selected in each survey with a total sample of 4,905 young people in the endline and 4,926 in the baseline survey. The baseline survey was carried out in 2004 and an endline survey in 2006.

The report said that more than 96 per cent of the youth in the baseline survey and almost all in the endline survey claimed of knowing about at least one contraceptive. The knowledge of youths about at least two modern contraceptives was found to have increased significantly

in the endline survey compared to the baseline survey.

Awareness level of contraceptives was significantly higher among those who had participated in RHIYA activities than that of those unexposed in the case of both males and females.

The project expected to contribute to the overall objective of an improved sexual and reproductive health of young people in the country. In addition to this, the project also targeted capacity building of health workers, teachers, community leaders, parents and community based organisations to prepare them to implement, manage and sustain project activities and to foster youth-friendly services to the target population, the report said. Seven NGOs implemented the project. They are Aamaa Milan Kendra, BP Memorial Health Foundation, Environment, Health and development Advisory Group, Family Planning Association in Nepal, Public Health Concern Trust - Nepal, Samjhauta Nepal and Sunaulo Parivar Nepal.

Speaking at the programme, Director General at the Department of Health Services Dr. Mahendra Bahadur Bista said that the RHIYA has achieved a lot of success and lesson learned programme in Nepal. He said

that young people have been facing different problems related to sexual and reproductive health so, the programme would help them explore their problems.

Dr. Bista said that the government was carrying out every programme in partnership with NGOs and he added that the government and NGOs should join hands to make the programmes a success.

UNFPA representatives Junko Sazaki said that the programme has been implemented in seven countries in Asia. She said that RHIYA programme in Nepal has been instrumental in setting up 92 Youth Information Centres and 55 Youth Friendly Services Delivery Services for the benefit of youths. She said that local community implemented the programme.

Sailesh Neupane presented comparative analysis of RHIYA baseline and endline surveys. He said that among the young people over 60 per cent were from disadvantaged groups.

The report said that during over three years execution and implementation, RHIYA programmes in Nepal has been able to bring about some positive and favorable changes in knowledge, attitude and practices among adolescent and youths as evidenced from the baseline and endline studies.