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*Celebrating*  
**25 years**  
of  
1983-2008  
*Committed Services on SRHR*



## Reproductive Health Services Training & Education Program (RHSTEP)

## Limelights of Success

RHSTEP is an NGO work for the commoners and committed to uphold and improve Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights (SRHR). During its long lease of 25 years of services (1983 - 2008), trotted a long checkered marathon journey across its 35 service delivery points sprawled over 20 districts, came in contacts and served approximately 2 million individuals in various components of sexual and reproductive health issues, imparted training / education and built up BCC / Awareness / advocacy programmes.

Pioneered in Capacity Building of service providers of GO/NGOs and private organizations. Yearly out-put is approximately 650 personnel. So far, trained 8,342 doctors, 4,334 FWVs - Nurses - Paramedics-SACMOs in Comprehensive MR Training as well as 2,864 FWVs underwent in Refresher MR Training.

### Beneficiaries of services rendered so far

Approximately average yearly attendance of clients/ at RHSTEP Centers/Clinics is 6,00,000. Services rendered to clients under composite constituents of the SRHR include :

- MR Service : 10,13,182
- General Health Care : 74,426

- Maternal Health Care : 42,283
- Management of complications of unsafe abortion : 6,672
- Other obstetric services : 27,646
- Pathology services viz., Paps Smear Screening, Histo, Ultrasonogram, Blood, Urine, Stool etc. : 1,64,747
- Adolescents Health Care Services administered in clinics, Schools, Garments and Communities : 4,92,121
- BCC on SRHR : 16,21,492

### Highlighted characteristics of RHSTEP performances during this period since its inception in a nutshell summed up as

1. Introduced ASRHR: Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Program on 17 May 2003.
2. Paps Smear Screening Programme launched in 2004.
3. SAAF Satellite clinics commissioned in February 2006.
4. A three-year (tenure July 2007 - June 2010) SRHR Consortium Project entitled "Comprehensive Reproductive and Sexual

Health Program including MR Services, Training and BCC (comprehensive RSH Program)" with Sida signed on 19 March 2008.

5. Selected as "Lead Agency" for SRHR Consortium by Sida, 2008.
6. Enlarged scope of collaboration activities with RFSU (Swedish Association for Sexuality Education), 2008.
7. Augmented Programme activities and stretched out in outlying remote Hard to Reach Areas including Chittagong Hill Tracts Districts.
8. Operationalized of Vocational Training Center (VTC) for disadvantaged women at Uttara and its neighbourhoods.
9. Developed various BCC / Advocacy materials (leaflets, brochures, pamphlets, posters), modules of training, service protocols, financial manual etc.

RHSTEP is an evolution of one of the heirs of public initiatives and a unique example of GO-NGO collaboration dedicated to improving the Reproductive health status of women, men, children and adolescents thereby contributing towards achieving the goals of MDGs and PRSP in Bangladesh.

## Backdrop of discerned achievement may be traced back to

"Around the world a woman loses her life every minute during pregnancy because of malnutrition, complications of unsafe abortion, lack of skilled birth attendant and lack access to emergency obstetric care."-(Ms. Britt F. Hagstrom, Her Excellency Ambassador of Sweden, 19 February 2006).

"Every Safe Menstruation Regulation Procedure Saves the Life of a Woman" (Based on the Penal Code of India, 1860) is a humanitarian cause - a philanthropic approach to defend the crying needs of human civilization and survival. The deaths to women due to pregnancy and child birth complications in Bangladesh is about 3.2/1000 live births which is many times higher than the rates in the developed countries. To overcome this challenge, the best positive intervention is MR.

MR service plays a multi-dimensional vital role in ensuring the reproductive health of women. Firstly, it contributes to women's reproductive health by preventing the deaths caused by induced and unsafe abortion. Secondly, it helps in fertility control; and thirdly, has potential in Family Planning Services as a treatment of contraceptive failures. Considering the stern realities, the GOB in 1979 incorporated MR in the National Family Planning Program and allowed MR to be performed in well-equipped clinics along with imparting large-scale quality MR Training for the service providers. Streamlining MR provision as an action point, GOB started MR Training and MR Services in 10 clinic based Centers, - 7

situated in Medical College Hospitals, 2 in Sadar Hospitals and 1 in Mohammadpur Fertility Services and Training Center (MFSTC).

In 1983, GOB formally established MRTSP (Menstruation Regulation Training and Services Program) as a Special Project under the Family Planning Wing of the then Ministry Of Health and Family Planning (now MOHFW).

In 1989, it turned into an NGO and in 2000 considering the needs of its involvement into the GOB Health Programme and in exploring wider scopes of rendering services, MRTSP stepped forward by changing the name of the Organization into Reproductive Health Services Training & Education Program (RHSTEP). It gradually engaged its workforce to all the components of Reproductive health care services for reducing MMR, IMR, TFR, Safe Motherhood, undertook MR Service Providers training, MR Services, IP Protocol, ANC, PNC, Pre and Post MR Counseling, child care, EOC, Immunization, RTI/STI case management, HIV/AIDS, Pathology Services, Paps Smear Tests, Adolescent Reproductive Health Care Services, Awareness/BCC/Advocacy, monitoring-evaluation of some services providers out of existing about 4000 rural/urban MR Service providing facilities by random follow-up visits periodically.

## Goal of RHSTEP

Committed to improve Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

## Working Area of RHSTEP

At present, RHSTEP is working at govt. medical college hospitals, sadar and general hospitals in all over Bangladesh. There are also several community clinics situated outside the percents of grapiest

medical facilities in Bangladesh.

## Objectives

- ◆ Contribute in reduction of maternal and infant mortality and morbidity;
- ◆ Launch campaigns to remove all social prejudices, reduce early marriage - early pregnancy by promoting family planning methods and contraceptive services, awareness / BCC / advocacy , Pre and Post MR counseling, ANC, PNC, and adolescent health care services;
- ◆ Prevent unsafe abortion, ensure IP Protocol, increase contraceptive choices, ease access and advocate for ensuring Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of women, human rights, CEDAW, Peer understanding etc;
- ◆ All-out endeavours are going on in involving participation of civil society, pressure groups, professional groups, religious leaders, politicians and private sector representatives in strengthening SRHR campaign in Bangladesh.

In the elapse of tides of time, RHSTEP surmounted many obstacles to anchor ashore, more challenges lie ahead in its course of action. RHSTEP pledges its commitment to serve the disadvantaged women, men, adolescents and children, sustains its all-out endeavours to work on MR issues and address the growing concerns confronting women folks in the sexual and reproductive health and rights. At the celebration of 25th anniversary of SRH activism, RHSTEP looks forward to meeting new challenges and continuing growth and effectiveness during the next 25 years from now. In this challenge and onward march to our cherished mission, we most ardently hope that we shall get all-out co-operation and assistance from all concerted quarters. ■■■■■■

