

# OUR HEALTH OUR VOICE

Placing adolescent health at the heart of urban planning, PRIA, University of Glasgow, and Gurugram University have come together to undertake Participatory Action Research with adolescents residing in urban informal settlements in Gurugram. The study titled 'Our Health, Our Voice' seeks to advance the use of participatory research methodology into the thematic area of adolescent health.



## Online Focus-Group Discussion (FGD) with mothers of adolescents

The nutritional intake of adolescents is cost-sensitive. Mothers can include seasonal vegetables and lentils as part of daily diet. Expensive food items like meat and fish cannot be cooked everyday.

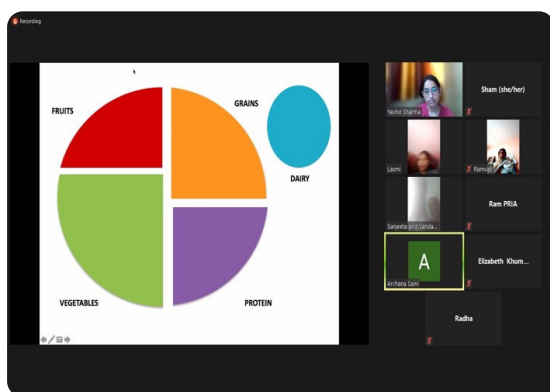
Gender discriminatory practices in providing nutrition was not observed.

Frontline health workers need to increase their community outreach to targeting adolescent health nutrition.

### Exploring social determinants of adolescent nutrition

How do mothers identify nutritional requirement of adolescent children?

What challenges do mothers face in ensuring adequate nutrition (300g of vegetables and 100g of fruits as per guidelines) for their adolescent children?

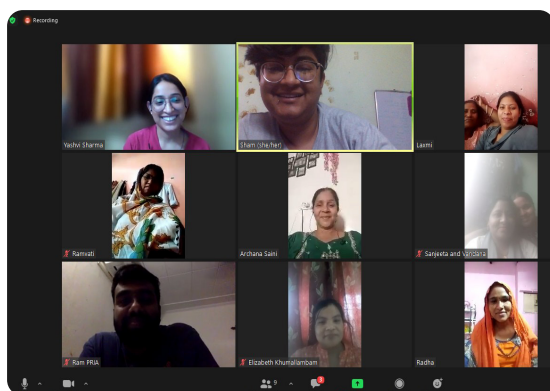


## MY SERVING PLATE

Online Focus Group Discussions were conducted with mothers/care-givers of adolescents living in Gurugram in order to explore the social determinants of nutrition

To understand how mothers meet the nutritional requirements of their adolescent children, an ideal 'serving plate' consisting of **fruits, grains, vegetables, protein and dairy products** was presented. The 'serving plate' was created on Zoom whiteboard and mothers were encouraged to list down the food items that they include as part of the daily diet of adolescents. The listed food items were added to the plate to reflect the dietary patterns of adolescents.

The mothers listed food items like **saag (green leafy vegetables), seasonal vegetables, eggs and some non-vegetarian items.**



From the diagram, we understood that seasonal vegetables are included in the diet more than four times in a week, while eggs and non-vegetarian food items like meat and chicken are served once in a week, as they are more expensive.

## RESPONSES OF MOTHERS OF ADOLESCENTS & CARE-GIVERS

*"I am aware that children require badam (almond) for their mental development."*



*"A litre of milk costs Rs.25, so we can only give them small quantity"*

The nutritional intake of adolescents is cost-sensitive. Meat products and nuts are not included in the daily diet of adolescents due to high cost. Mothers substitute expensive food items with cheaper and local seasonal items like vegetables, lentils and pulses as part of the daily diet of adolescents.

*"We restrict the pocket money that is given to them so that they stay away from eating junk food. It is not healthy for them. So, we try and feed them home-cooked food whenever they feel like snacking."*



Packaged food items, popularly known as junk food, has higher preference among adolescent boys and girls. However, mothers are hesitant to indulge their children with 'unhealthy food'.

*"Both boys and girls have their respective nutritional requirements. It (quantity) is also dependent on the affinity of individuals to consume food. Food is as much important for boys as it is for girls."*



No gender discrimination in providing nutrition was observed in the community. Mothers attested to the necessity of providing adequate amount of nutrition to both boys and girls.

*"I have seen pregnant women being counselled by health workers in the community as to what to consume (or not). But no such training was held when our children were growing up."*



The mothers expressed need for training and information dissemination sessions to get a holistic understanding on nutrition and its impact on adolescent health.

*"I saw her (frontline health worker) coming once in the other building, that was before the lockdown was imposed (late 2019 or early 2020). After that, she has never come."*



Frontline health workers need to undertake more dedicated outreach with regard to adolescent health and nutrition along with targeting pregnant women for monitoring their health status.



Click on the thumbnail to access the detailed report of Focus Group Discussions with mothers



Click on the thumbnail to access the A/V on 'Focus-Group Discussions with adolescents and their caregivers in Gurugram'

