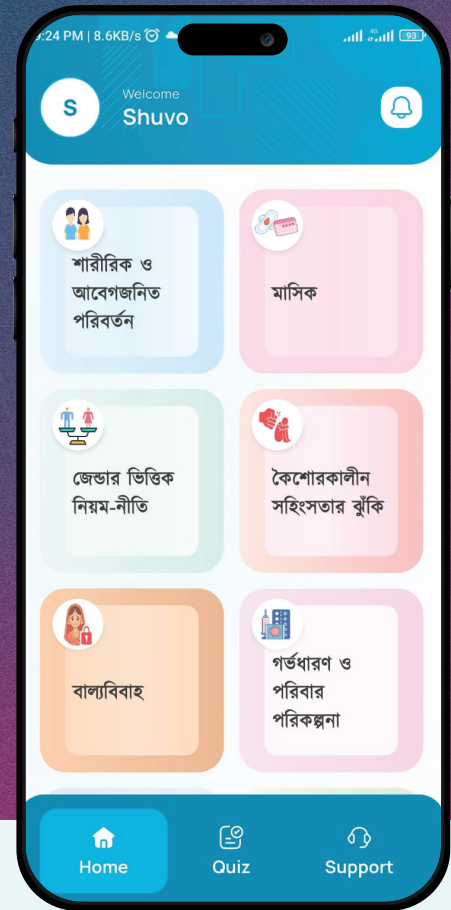


Koishor-Kotha (কৈশোর কথা): A Mobile App for Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Education

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Published in June 2026

Background

Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) education is immensely important for adolescents to better understand the physical and mental changes during puberty and to be healthy, informed, and educated citizens. However, due to cultural sensitivity, ignorance, and resistance, adolescents feel uncomfortable discussing their SRH queries with parents, teachers, and other adults. So, informal sources become the most common information hub, which often misguides adolescents.

While the National Curriculum and Textbook Board covers some SRH topics in high schools, teachers often avoid covering these subjects in the classroom. National survey data indicate that 60–70% of adolescents seek information on puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, and family planning, with the internet and mobile phones being their preferred sources (Bangladesh Adolescent Health and Well-being Survey 2019-20). Given the high levels of household mobile

phone ownership (98%) and adolescent access (approximately 93% among 15–19-year-olds), mobile applications offer a promising platform for SRH education. Many mobile-based apps are available to inform the SRH aspect. However, only a few are in **Bangla** language and do not cover wide aspects of SRH, including physical and emotional changes during puberty, equitable gender norms, mental health screening, menstrual disorders, particularly male SRH, vaccination, etc. Moreover, evidence on the acceptability, usability, adoption, feasibility, and parental view of a mobile app providing SRH information to adolescents is limited.

Therefore, this study aimed to develop a comprehensive Bangla-language mobile application on adolescent SRH information, Koishor Kotha, and to assess its acceptability, usability, adoption, feasibility, user satisfaction, and challenges in accessing and navigating.

Published in June 2026

Study Objective

Primary Objective:

Development and testing of a culturally adapted, adolescent-friendly, comprehensive SRH mobile app in Bangla.

Specific Objectives:

- Assess app acceptability, usability, adoption, and feasibility
- Explore user satisfaction and challenges in app access and navigation
- Explore parents' views about app content and adolescent app use

Methodology

Study design	This is an implementation research involving a mixed-method approach
Study participants	Primary: Adolescent boys and girls currently studying in grades 9 and 10 Secondary: Parents of the sampled adolescents
Study site	Baliakandi Upazila, Rajbari district, Bangladesh
Implementation	4 purposively selected high schools from Baliakandi
Sample	618 students participated in the study: 311 Boys & 307 Girls

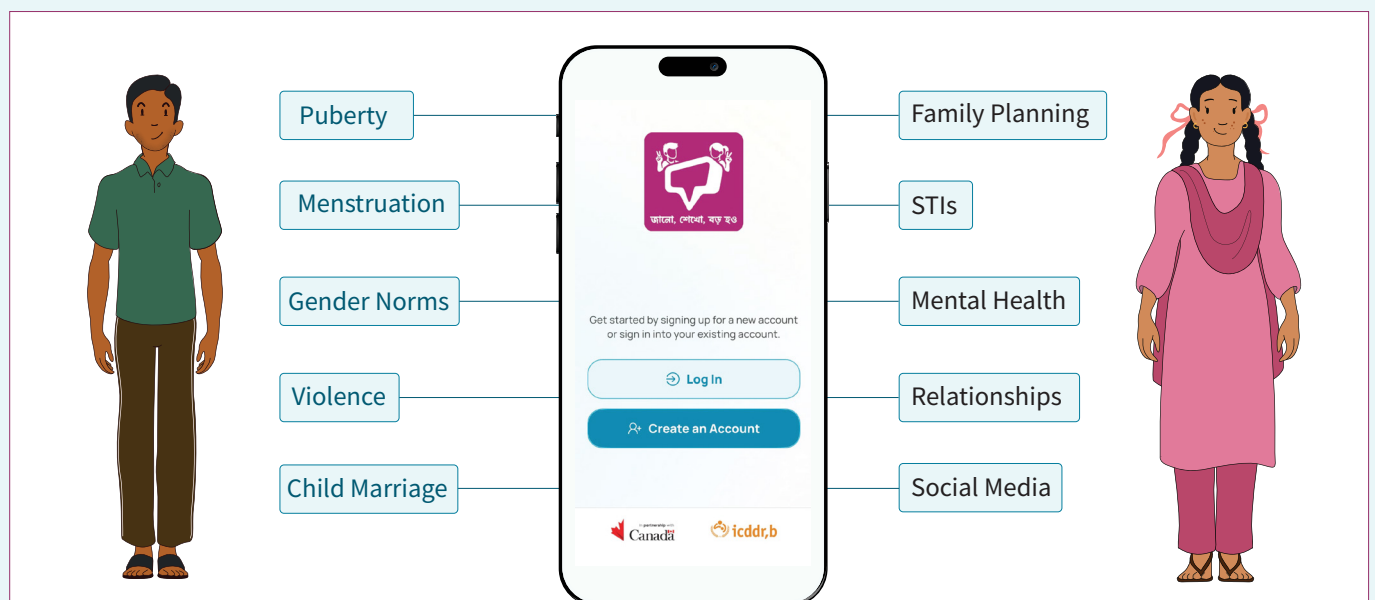
App Development: Existing App Ecosystem



What adolescents still need and what existing apps do not cover:

Male SRH	Gender Norm	Relationship	Mental Health
Social Media	Myths vs. Facts	Helpline Support	Bangla Content

Koishor-Kotha App



Learning Resources Created

Animations
20

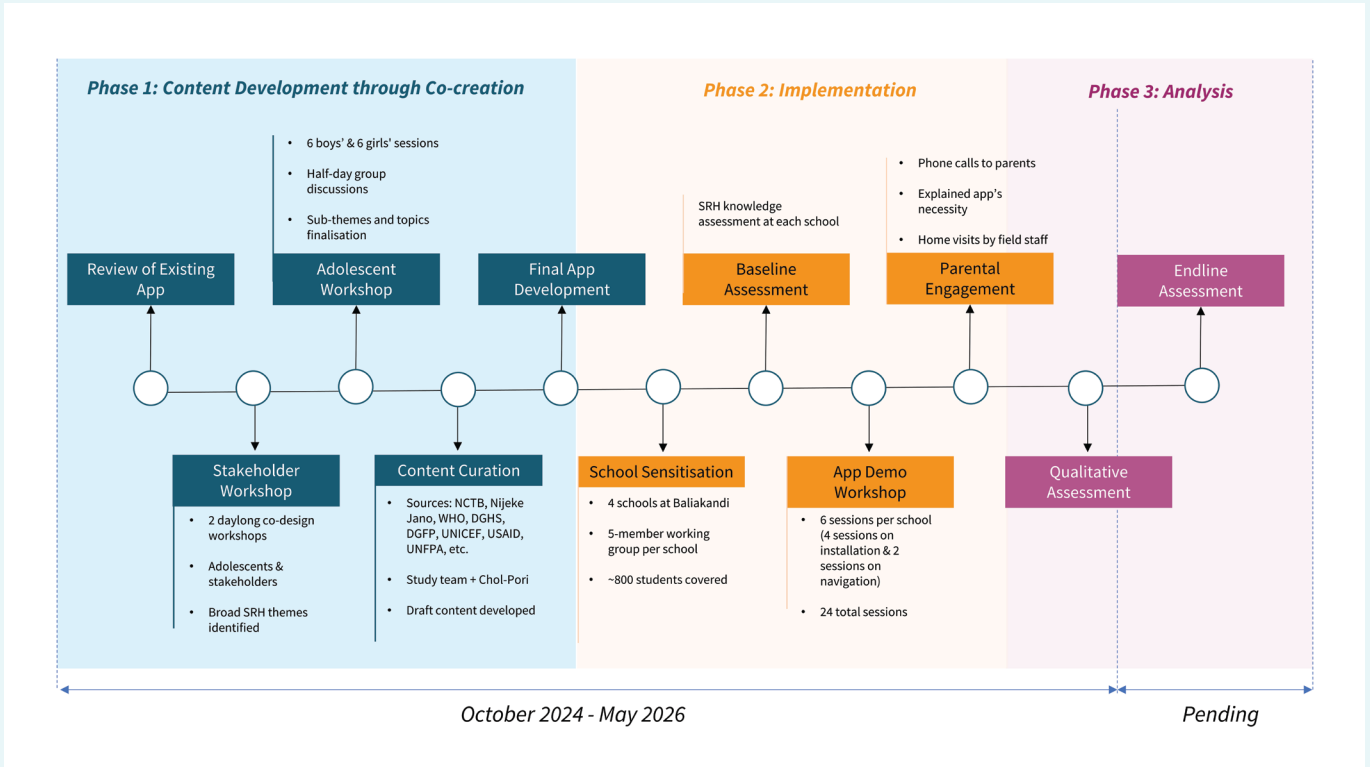
Infographics
46

FAQs
93

Service Points
35

Myths vs. Fact
84

Implementation milestones



Key findings (till May 2026)

Implementation Challenges

520 students installed the app		
Disrupted School Schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports events Exams Ramadan Political instability 	Student Attendance Gaps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seasonal earning opportunities Students' political affiliations 	Logistical Constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smartphone shortages Unreliable internet Frequent load-shedding
Low Digital Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited digital skills especially among girls 	Human resource shortage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy workloads for teachers Voluntary participation structure Teachers' own digital literacy gaps 	

Findings from the In-depth Interviews (IDIs)

Opportunity

- Self-learning
- Self-paced repeated learning
- Privacy
- No shame
- Detailed content
- Easy to understand
- Preference for video
- User-friendly navigation




We study these topics in the Sharirik Shikkha textbook, and teachers discuss them in class, but we cannot openly talk about everything with teachers. With this app, I can explore and learn on my own because everything is clearly explained. I really like that I can gain so much knowledge independently."




Adolescent Girl (Class 9)

“ If these topics are discussed in class, many students feel embarrassed. Some may laugh, make comments, or tease others. Through the app, there is privacy, and everyone can learn at their own pace without feeling uncomfortable.”

 Adolescent Boy (Class 10)

“ I believe every girl should learn about these adolescent health topics from the age of 10 or 12. Not everyone feels comfortable talking openly with their mother. I think this app is beneficial for adolescents because they can learn independently without having to rely solely on their mothers for information.”

 Mother of an Adolescent Girl


Challenges

- Lack of a smartphone
- Older age
- Temptation for other uses of mobile (e.g., TikTok, games, social media, etc.)
- Limited scope for parental monitoring
- Parental hesitance on SRH learning


“ I usually spend my free time listening to music. If the app included TikTok-style content or music, I would be more interested in using it regularly.”

 Adolescent Girl

“ Because of this app, my child has been asking me for a mobile phone. I told him that even if I buy him one, there is no guarantee that he will use it for the app. Instead, he might spend time watching Hindi songs, TikTok videos, or other entertainment. Right now, he mostly stays at home, but if he gets a phone, he may go outside and use it for things I cannot monitor.”

 Father of an Adolescent Boy

“ I encourage my child studying on a mobile phone. For example, if there is an English lesson, I would be happy for my child to download and study it on the phone. But I am not very interested in these topics (adolescent health). I prefer educational content related to school studies.”

 Mother of an Adolescent Girl

This Study is funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) through the Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (AdSEARCH) by icddr,b project. Grant number: SGDE-EDRMS-#9926532, Purchase Order 7428855, Project P007358.




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