

## Disparities Even among the Poor: a Challenge towards Achieving Millennium Development Goal 5 in Myanmar

Phyu Phyu Thin Zaw<sup>1</sup>, Tippawan Liabsuetrakul<sup>2</sup>, Thien Thien Htay<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Medical Research, Upper Myanmar

<sup>2</sup> Epidemiology Unit, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Health, Nay Pyi Taw

7<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights, Manila, Philippines, January 2013

### Abstract

#### Objectives

Good progress towards the Millennium Development Goal 5 (MDG 5) has been observed in most countries; however, it has been uneven among different regions and even slow in some parts of the developing world. The MDG 5 at the national level cannot be achieved if geographical or socio-economic disparities within the country persist. Monitoring the MDG 5 not only at the national level but also within sub-populations living in particular geographical locations is important. This study, thus, aimed to evaluate the disparities in the achievements towards the MDG 5 among youths living in three different settlements of 10 suburban communities of extreme poverty in Mandalay city, Myanmar. During May 2011 to November 2011, a community-based, cross-sectional study was conducted among male and female youths aged between 15-24 years residing in all 10 suburban communities of extreme poverty in Mandalay city. Specific indicators of MDG 5 used in this study were the coverage of deliveries by a skilled birth attendant (SBA), contraceptive prevalence (CP), unmet need for family planning (FP), coverage of at least 4 antenatal care visits (ANC 4), and the rate of teenage pregnancy (TP). Based on the common type of occupation, geographic and socio-economic conditions of the population, the 10 poor communities were further divided into three types of settlement; namely formal, riverbank and *Polakee* (Waste recyclers) settlements. Chi-square tests were used to assess the disparity of achieved indicators among the three types of settlement which was calculated as the difference of each indicator between the settlements (formal-riverbank difference, formal-*Polakee* difference and riverbank-*Polakee* difference) by using pairwise comparisons. The SBA coverage, CP, the unmet need for FP, ANC 4 coverage, and the rate of TP among the youths in all settlements were 70%, 62%, 35%, 40% and 18%, respectively. The SBA and ANC 4 coverage was the highest in the formal settlements while CP was the highest in the *Polakee* settlement. The river-bank settlement had the highest unmet need of FP while the rate of TP was the highest in the *Polakee* settlement. Significant differences in ANC 4 coverage was found between the formal

and riverbank settlements and between the formal and *Polakee* settlements. Significant differences of TP rates were found between the formal and *Pokalee* settlements and between the riverbank and *Polakee* settlements. The existence of disparities, even among the poor, in the achievements towards MDG 5 targets is an urgent issue for the policy makers. To achieve MDG 5 in 2015, tailored approaches to reduce the socio-economic and geographic disparities and implement RH services to the grassroots level especially in those suburban areas of extreme poverty is needed in Myanmar as well as in other developing countries where similar vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups exist.