

# MATERNAL HEALTH

*CommonHealth's journey so far*

B Subha Sri,  
CommonHealth General members' meeting  
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- We believe that women have the right to the highest attainable standards of maternal health and maternal health care.
- Maternal health services have to be
  - Available
  - Accessible
  - Acceptable
  - Good quality

# The global scenario

- ICPD – 1994
  - Human rights based
  - Defined reproductive health – through the woman's life cycle
- Millennium Development Goals – 2000
  - Narrowed it to target oriented approaches
  - Technical solutions

**Reproductive health**

**MMR**

**Skilled birth attendant**

**Institutional delivery**

**Incentive**

**JSY**

# Current challenges

- Refocusing on Reproductive Health and Maternal Health as one component
- Repoliticising maternal health to include socio political determinants

# CH strategies

- Challenge the technocentric paradigm - “safe delivery”
  - Irrespective of where
  - Definition of safety
- Integrate within reproductive health continuum
- Focus on abortion

*What have we done so far?*

# Centrestaging “Safe delivery”

- We asked several people what this meant
  - Activists
  - Academics
  - Civil society
  - Women at the grassroots
- Several domains emerged.
- Definition of “safe delivery” based on this.
- Using this as a basis of monitoring maternal health care.



# Critique of maternal health policy



# The Barwani fact finding

- Poor maternal health services and outcomes in spite of NRHM's investment in health systems
- Very poor governance and accountability as one of the main causes of the poor services
  - Poor quality of care
  - Apathy from professionals
  - Frequent flouting of ethical principles of care
  - Dereliction of duty
  - Absence of grievance redressal systems
  - No maternal death reviews in spite of being mandated
  - Corruption

# Dead Women Talking

- Several documentations of maternal deaths by civil society groups from different parts of India including from Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- Need to centrestage the lived experiences of the women and their families.
- Juxtaposed to indicator oriented approach that does not take into account social determinants.
- Led to the Dead Women Talking process
- Accountability as an important issue that needs to be addressed.

# Increasing accountability for maternal health

- **Strengthening Maternal Death Reviews**
  - Include social determinants
  - Community involvement
- **Monitoring QoC based on safe delivery indicators**

# Building capacities for maternal health

- Making Pregnancy Safer courses
  - Gender and rights based understanding of maternal health
  - Civil society organizations
  - Health system – District health officials, Programme managers
- Maternal Death Reviews and monitoring QoC
  - Civil society organizations
  - In partnership with other organizations