

Reproductive Health Histories of Women

Evidence building on access to sexual and reproductive health services specifically for different marginalized groups

In order to strengthen advocacy for reproductive health services, the research was undertaken to build evidence on access to SRHR from different marginalised groups of women from different geographies and to bring their voices forth. This research attempted to understand the issues in SRHR from the holistic perspective and from the rights framework. The study was different in the manner such that it tried to elicit women's narratives or stories through detailed conversations with them about their lives overall, with a focus on sexual and reproductive health.

The method, reproductive health histories, sought to do is to document women's own stories as data, and apply a gender and rights lens to analyse and interpret the data. It sought to make meaning from the collation of experiences of women, especially women from the marginal backgrounds, who have not had the opportunity to have their voices heard and to have their experiences inform the body of knowledge on sexual and reproductive health of women in India.

Objectives of the study

In the above context, the specific objectives of this research are:

1. To understand and document sexual and reproductive health pathways of women from different marginalized groups as they have experienced during different reproductive life stages
2. To document the enablers and barriers in accessing care for sexual and reproductive health issues
3. To document experiences of women with regard to any violations of sexual and reproductive rights at the household and community levels
4. To document health provider's perspectives and challenges in service provisioning with regard to sexual and reproductive health issues
5. To document policy and programme context with regard to Sexual and reproductive health rights as they influence the marginalized population at each study setting

1.1 Study settings and population

The study was conducted with the different marginal groups in the states of UP, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Orissa by the CH partner organisations working in their respective areas with the marginalized sections, the details of which are below:

1. SAHAYOG an NGO based in Orissa works towards improving healthcare focusing on the issues of RMNCH among the tribal populations. It proposed to study the tribal communities in Khordha district.
2. SAHAJ an NGO in Vadodara, strives to make a difference in the lives of underprivileged people, both through direct action in the communities as well as through action research and policy advocacy. SAHAJ focuses on social accountability and citizenship building for children, adolescents and women in two specific sectors - Health and Education. SAHAJ proposed to study adolescent groups in the age of 19 -24 years in Vadodara.
3. Saheli HIV/AIDS Karyakarta Sangh is a community-based organization and a sex workers' collective established in 1998 in Pune. The aim was to bring women in sex work together and to solve their problems by taking initiatives to ensure that their human rights are protected. It proposes to undertake the study with the Sex Workers' group. The study was conducted with women in sex work living in Budhwar peth of Pune city.
4. RUWSEC (Rural Women's Social Education Centre) is a non-governmental organisation working for women's health and reproductive rights, founded in 1981 by 13 women, 12 of whom were Dalit women. RUWSEC's broad activities include innovative field programmes and research on gender, SRHR and social justice, and running a reproductive health clinic and resource centre. It undertook the study in Kancheepuram district situated on the northern East Coast of Tamil Nadu and is adjacent by Bay of Bengal and Chennai city.
5. The YP Foundation (TYPF) is a feminist and youth-led organisation which works with youth and adolescents in building their leadership in areas of health and gender equality using a rights-based and intersectional lens. The study was conducted in Urban Delhi.