Reproductive life is a very personal, private and forbidden subject in our society. People often do not discuss problems related to reproductive health. Every individual, every family and every community at some point is intimately involved with pregnancy and the success of child birth. Yet every day a large number of mothers are suffering from pregnancy and majority of them have a poor pregnancy outcome which results reproductive health problems and complications.

In order to mitigate the reproductive health problems, complications and to improve the pregnancy outcome, the government of India launched many programmes. They mainly intended to improve SRH among women.

This chapter mainly outlines the strategies for the improvement of rural women’s reproductive health. The strategies have been developed to overcome the hurdles and to enhance SRH.

The strategic objectives are
1. Enhance Women’s Literacy Rates
2. School Based Reproductive Health Education
3. Ensure Safe Motherhood
4. Involvement of Men in Women’s Health
5. Enhance Women’s Reproductive Rights
6. Improve Women’s Empowerment
7. Improve Accessibility and Quality Health Care Services
8. Increase Resources for Women’s Health
9. Strengthen Preventive Programmes that Promote Women’s Health
10. Undertake Gender-sensitive initiative that addresses SRH issues
11. Promote Research & Disseminate information on Women’s Health
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE – 1

ENHANCE WOMEN’S LITERACY RATES

- Literacy classes should be organized in village centers. Additionally, learning centers will be established with highly respected local teachers who guaranteed the moral security of the participants.

- Parents also must be educated regarding benefits of female education by enrolling their girls in formal schools. Improve access to education for girls of poor families in order to delay early child bearing.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE – 2

SCHOOL BASED REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH EDUCATION

- A reproductive health (RH) curriculum will be developed by experts. Teachers will be trained to lead the sessions and a variety of different materials were used in the training, including slide presentations, handouts, pamphlets, posters and flip charts.

- Emphasis on education with particular attention on school drop-outs illiterate adolescent girls and women. The educational activities related to SRH should be conducted through non-formal education pattern. The adolescent girls may be congregated at Anganwadi Centre and the education could be provided through experts, consultants, NGOs and specialized government functionaries.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE – 3

ENSURE SAFE MOTHERHOOD

- An information campaign designed the public to raise awareness on safe motherhood. Educate and ensure the community regarding the
importance and benefits of natal check-ups at regular intervals of time and even hospital delivery.

- The women should be provided with free consultation cards for medical examinations from government hospitals or health care centers. Development of health insurance schemes for women to cover obstetric emergencies.

- A concerted effort is to be made to provide nutritional and health education including sanitation and personal hygiene aspects. Ensure the regular supply of Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) and De-worming tablets.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE – 4**

**INVLOVEMENT OF MEN IN WOMEN’S HEALTH**

- Educate and encourage men regarding the importance of women's health and well-being, placing special focus on programmes for both men and women that emphasize the elimination of harmful attitudes.

- Encourage men to share equally in child care and household work and to provide their share of financial support for their families, even if they do not live with them.

- Training physicians to involve men in maternity care, which has resulted in more husbands accompanying their wives to antenatal clinics.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE – 5**

**ENHANCE WOMEN’S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS**

- Various rallies, movements, campaigns, and seminars should be held in rural areas to increase more consciousness among the women to access effectively all the reproductive rights.
- Prepare and disseminate accessible information, through public health campaigns, the media, reliable counseling and the education system, designed to ensure that women and men, particularly young people, can acquire knowledge about their health, especially information on sexuality and reproduction.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE – 6**

**IMPROVE WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT**

- Environment is to be created among public and families where women demand knowledge and information, empowering themselves to change their lives.

- Legal literacy and knowledge of rights could be provided to adolescent girls and women. A module for training in Anganwadi Centres for empowerment of women should be developed in consultation with local experts/consultants.

- Engage rural women and girls as active partners in planning and operating programs at all decision-making levels. Encourage them by providing opportunities for participating in entrepreneurial, social and other development activities. Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE – 7**

**IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND QUALITY OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES**

- Provide monetary assistance to poor rural women. Introduce community financing schemes. Promote private services for those who can afford it and assure public funds are used to finance transportation and care for the poor.
- Develop effective 'poor-friendly' Referral Systems. Strengthen partnerships between traditional birth attendants and skilled formal providers. Built a strong referral system and established maternity waiting homes for rural women.

- Improve and ensure the quality and availability of essential and emergency obstetric care services for the Poor people. This can be done within existing resources from communities, government and the private sector.

- Promote state initiatives offering financial incentives to rural health care practitioners and providers of rural obstetric care and reproductive health services.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE – 8**

**INCREASE RESOURCES FOR WOMEN’S HEALTH**

- Increase budgetary allocations for primary health care and social services, with adequate support for secondary and tertiary levels. Give special attention to the SRH of girls and women.

- Develop innovative approaches to funding health services through promoting community participation and local financing. Increase, where necessary, budgetary allocations for community health centre and community-based programmes and services that address women's specific health needs.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE – 9**

**STRENGHTEN PREVENTIVE PROGRAMMES THAT PROMOTE WOMEN’S HEALTH**
Reinforce laws and promote norms and practices that eliminate discrimination against women and encourage both women and men to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behavior.

Recognize the specific needs of adolescents and implement specific appropriate programmes, such as education and information on SRH issues and STIs including HIV/AIDS.

Ensure that medical school curricula and other health-care training include gender-sensitive, comprehensive and mandatory courses on women's health.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE – 11**

**UNDERTAKE GENDER-SENSITIVE INITIATIVE THAT ADDRESSES SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH ISSUES**

- Develop gender-sensitive multisectoral programmes to end social subordination of women and girls and to ensure their social and economic empowerment and equality; facilitate promotion of programmes to educate and enable men to assume their responsibilities to prevent sexual and reproductive health issues.

- Encourage all sectors of society to develop compassionate and supportive, non-discriminatory sexual and reproductive health related policies and practices that protect the rights of infected individuals.

- Provide workshops and specialized education and training to parents, decision makers and opinion leaders at all levels of the community, including religious and traditional authorities on prevention of sexual and reproductive health issues.

- Ensure the provision, through the primary health-care system, of universal access of couples and individuals to appropriate and affordable preventive services with respect to sexual and reproductive health issues.
and expand the provision of counseling and voluntary and confidential diagnostic and treatment services for women.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE – 12**

**PROMOTE RESEARCH AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ON WOMEN’S HEALTH**

- Train researchers and introduce systems that allow for the use of data collected, analyzed and disaggregated by among other factors, sex and age, other established demographic criteria and socio-economic variables in policy-making as appropriate, planning, monitoring and evaluation.

- Increase the number of women in leadership positions in the health professions, including researchers and scientists, to achieve equality at the earliest possible date.

- Develop mechanisms to evaluate and disseminate available data and research findings to researchers, policy makers, health professionals and women's groups, among others.