CHAPTER - I V

AWARENESS OF YOUTH ON
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS
CHAPTER - IV

LEVEL OF AWARENESS AMONG YOUTH ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RIGHTS

Human Rights are Rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of gender, nationality, place of residency, sex, ethnicity, religion, color or and other categorization. Thus, human rights are non-discriminatory, meaning that all human beings are entitled to them and cannot be excluded from them. Of course, while all human beings are entitled to human rights, not all human beings experience them equally throughout the world. Many governments and individuals ignore human rights and grossly exploit other human beings.

Women’s sexual and ‘Reproductive Health’ is related to multiple Human Rights, including the right to life, the right to be free from torture, the right to health, the right to privacy, the right to education, and the prohibition of discrimination. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) have both clearly indicated that women’s right to health includes their sexual and ‘Reproductive Health’. This means that States have obligations to respect, protect and fulfill rights related to women’s sexual and ‘Reproductive Health’.

In 2011, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a new Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS which emphasizes Member States’ “commitment to fulfil obligations to promote universal respect for and the observance and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in accordance with the Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other instruments relating to human rights and international law.”
Member States also committed to intensifying "national efforts to create enabling legal, social and policy frameworks in each national context in order to eliminate stigma, discrimination and violence related to HIV and promote access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support and non-discriminatory access to education, health care, employment and social services, provide legal protections for people affected by HIV, including inheritance rights and respect for privacy and confidentiality, and promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, with particular attention to all people vulnerable to and affected by HIV."

The Committee on the Rights of the Child has also underscored the need for States to develop prevention programmes and "to adopt legislation to combat practices that either increase adolescents' risk of infection or contribute to the marginalization of adolescents who are already infected with STDs, including HIV."

The Committee has also requested States to remove barriers that obstruct adolescents' access to information and preventive measures such as condoms. The Committee has further requested States to "consider allowing children to consent to certain medical treatments and interventions without the permission of a parent, caregiver, or guardian, such as HIV testing and sexual and 'Reproductive Health' services." Age of consent laws have been identified as a barrier to access to HIV-testing and other interventions, which results in delayed diagnosis and access to appropriate care. Discriminatory laws and practices associated with HIV responses hamper access to sexual health information and services.
Level of Awareness among Youth on Reproductive Health Rights

For instance, "when HIV status is used as the basis for differential treatment with regard to access to [inter alia] health care". People living with HIV/AIDS often face mistreatment by health care providers. According to the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, "they are reportedly turned away from hospitals, summarily discharged, denied access to medical services unless they consent to sterilization, and provided poor quality care that is both dehumanizing and damaging to their already fragile health status."

The prohibition against discrimination requires States to review and, if necessary, repeal or amend their laws, policies and practices to proscribe differential treatment which is based on arbitrary HIV-related criteria. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has also clarified that "States parties should ensure, without prejudice and discrimination, the right to sexual health information, education and services for all women and girls, including those who have been trafficked, even if they are not legally resident in the country." Women living with HIV are equally affected by laws and practices that discriminate against women, and inhibit their ability to make decisions about their own health care. These include laws which require women to obtain spousal, parental or guardian consent for certain sexual and 'Reproductive Health' services. "Spouses or parents [of HIV positive women] have also given consent for sterilization on behalf of women without their knowledge, and often on the basis of being misinformed themselves."
STATES HAVE OBLIGATIONS TO RESPECT, PROTECT AND FULFIL HUMAN RIGHTS IN RELATION TO HIV/AIDS

RESPECT

States should refrain from employing punitive measures criminalizing same-sex conduct, sex work, and HIV transmission. Laws and practices criminalizing such behaviours interfere with the enjoyment of sexual and ‘Reproductive Health’ and rights and have an adverse influence in combating HIV.

PROTECT

The obligation to protect requires States to prevent violations by third parties. Thus, for instance, States are required to ensure that health care providers do not impose mandatory HIV testing on people and that they respect confidentiality concerning HIV-related status and treatment.

FULFIL

The obligation to fulfil requires States to “take measures necessary to ensure for all persons, on a sustained and equal basis, the availability and accessibility of quality goods, services and information for HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, including antiretroviral and other safe and effective medicines, diagnostics and related technologies for preventive, curative and palliative care of HIV

Sexual and ‘Reproductive Health’ and Rights (SRHR) encompass the right of all individuals to make decisions concerning their sexual activity and reproduction free from discrimination, coercion, and violence.
Specifically, access to SRHR ensures individuals are able to choose whether, when, and with whom to engage in sexual activity; to choose whether and when to have children; and to access the information and means to do so. SRHR includes the right of all persons to:

- Seek, receive, and impart information related to sexuality;
- Receive sexuality education;
- Have respect for bodily integrity;
- Choose their partner;
- Decide to be sexually active or not;
- Have consensual sexual relations;
- Have consensual marriage;
- Decide whether or not, and when, to have children; and
- Pursue a satisfying, safe, and pleasurable sexual life. Comprehensive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services include:
  - Contraceptive information and services, including emergency contraception and a range of modern contraceptive methods;
  - Maternity care, including antenatal and postnatal care, and delivery care, particularly skilled attendance and emergency obstetric care;
  - Prevention and appropriate treatment of infertility;
  - Safe abortion and post-abortion care; Prevention, care, and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, reproductive tract infections, and reproductive cancers;
Level of Awareness among Youth on Reproductive Health Rights

- Information, education, and counseling; prevention and surveillance of violence against women (VAW), care for survivors of violence; and
- Actions to eliminate harmful traditional practices such as FGM and early and forced marriage.

In the present study a modest attempt was made to estimate the level of awareness on Reproductive rights based on Response of youth on the above aspects. The respondents are asked to express whether they a) Fully aware b) To some extent aware c) not aware the information on the above aspects.

Further an index was also developed to ascertain over all awareness level among youth on all the rights, together.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Statement on 'Reproductive Health' Rights</th>
<th>Tirupati Level of Awareness</th>
<th>Vijayawada Level of Awareness</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Right to ...</td>
<td>Fully Aware</td>
<td>To some extent aware</td>
<td>Not aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Seek, receive and impart information related to sexuality</td>
<td>22 (11%)</td>
<td>63 (31.5%)</td>
<td>115 (57.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Receive sexuality education</td>
<td>47 (23.5%)</td>
<td>67 (33.5%)</td>
<td>86 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Freedom to choose the Partner</td>
<td>81 (40.5%)</td>
<td>43 (21.5%)</td>
<td>76 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Decide to be sexually active or not</td>
<td>52 (26%)</td>
<td>47 (23.5%)</td>
<td>101 (50.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Have consensual sexual Relations between partners</td>
<td>41 (20.5%)</td>
<td>56 (28%)</td>
<td>103 (51.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Decide whether or not, and when, to have children</td>
<td>63 (31.5%)</td>
<td>47 (23.5%)</td>
<td>90 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Pursue a satisfying, safe, and pleasurable sexual life</td>
<td>51 (25.5%)</td>
<td>63 (31.5%)</td>
<td>86 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Information on Modern Contraceptive methods and emergency contraceptive</td>
<td>91 (45.5%)</td>
<td>47 (23.5%)</td>
<td>62 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Skilled assistance and emergency obstetric care</td>
<td>95 (47.5%)</td>
<td>63 (31.5%)</td>
<td>32 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Seek Appropriate Treatment for in-fertility</td>
<td>48 (24%)</td>
<td>51 (25.5%)</td>
<td>101 (50.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Seek safe abortion and post abortion care</td>
<td>72 (36%)</td>
<td>67 (33.5%)</td>
<td>61 (30.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>No discrimination for treatment for STD, HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>91 (45.5%)</td>
<td>63 (31.5%)</td>
<td>46 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Prevention and surveillance of sexual Violence Against Women (VAW)</td>
<td>62 (31%)</td>
<td>68 (34%)</td>
<td>70 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Action to eliminate harmful practices like FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)</td>
<td>31 (15.5%)</td>
<td>36 (18%)</td>
<td>123 (66.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Level of Awareness among Youth on Reproductive Health

Statement 1:

Regarding ‘Right to seek imparts information related to sexuality, only 11% in Tirupati 15% in Vijayawada. Were reported as ‘Fully aware’ and another 31% in Tirupati and 33% in Vijayawada expressed as ‘To some extent aware’. The remaining 57% in Tirupati and 51% in Vijayawada are ‘Not aware’ on this “Right on ‘Reproductive Health’”.

Statement 2:

Only 24% in Tirupati and 27% in youth in Vijayawada expressed as ‘Fully aware’ on the “Right to Receive Sexuality Education” and another 33% in Tirupati and 32% in Vijayawada expressed as ‘To some extent aware’ on this. The remaining 43% in Tirupati and 41% in Vijayawada did ‘Not aware’ on this Right.

Statement 3:

With regard to Right on “Freedom to choose the Partner” 41% in Tirupati and 46% in Vijayawada expressed on ‘Fully aware’ and 22% in Tirupati and 23% in Vijayawada mentioned ‘To some extent aware’ on this. The Remaining 38% in Tirupati and 30% in Vijayawada mentioned as ‘Not aware’ on this Right.

Statement 4:

Only 26% in Tirupati and 32% in Vijayawada were ‘Fully aware’ on the Right to “Decide to be sexually active or not”. Another 23% in Tirupati and 22% in Vijayawada were ‘To some extent aware’ on this. Nearly half of the respondents both in Tirupati and Vijayawada are ‘Not aware’ on this Right (50% & 46% respectively).
Level of Awareness among Youth on Reproductive Health Rights

Statement 5:

Only 20% in Tirupati and 28% of youth in Vijayawada expressed as 'Fully aware' on the Right to "Have consensual sexual Relations between partners". Another 28% in Tirupati and 29% in Vijayawada expressed as having 'To some extent aware' on this. Remaining 51% Tirupati and 43% in Vijayawada are 'Not aware' on this Right.

Statement 6:

Regarding the Right on "Decide whether or not, and when, to have children" 31% in Tirupati and 30% in Vijayawada expressed as 'Fully aware' and other 23% in Tirupati and 22% in Vijayawada are 'To some extent aware'. Remaining 45% Tirupati and 42% in Vijayawada are 'Not aware' on this Right.

Statement 7:

Regarding the Right to "Pursue a satisfying, safe, and pleasurable sexual life" 26% in Tirupati and 31% in Vijayawada reported as 'Fully aware' and 31% in Tirupati and 34% in Vijayawada expressed as 'To some extent aware'. The Remaining 38% Tirupati and 34% in Vijayawada are 'Not aware' on this Right.

Statement 8:

Regarding the Right to "Seek information on Modern Contraceptive methods and emergency contraceptive" 45% in Tirupati and 49% in Vijayawada are 'Fully aware' and 23% in Tirupati and 26% in Vijayawada expressed as 'To some extent
Level of Awareness among Youth on Reproductive Health Rights

aware' on this. The Remaining 31% Tirupati and 24% in Vijayawada are 'Not aware' on this Right.

Statement 9:

Regarding the Right to “Seek skilled assistance and emergency obstetric care” 47.5% in Tirupati and 51% of youth in Vijayawada expressed as ‘Fully aware’ and 31% in Tirupati and 30% in Vijayawada have expressed ‘To some extent aware’. The remaining 16% Tirupati and 18% of youth in Vijayawada are ‘Not aware’ on this Right.

Statement 10:

With regard to Right on “Seek Appropriate Treatment for in-fertility” only 24% in Tirupati and 29% in Vijayawada reported as ‘Fully aware’ and 25% in Tirupati and 28.5% in Vijayawada e expressed as ‘To some extent aware’. The remaining 50% Tirupati and 42% in Vijayawada are ‘Not aware’ on this Right.

Statement 11:

Regarding the Right to “Seek safe abortion and post abortion care” 36% in Tirupati and 38.5% of youth in Vijayawada expressed as ‘Fully aware’ and 33.5% in Tirupati and 37.5% in Vijayawada mentioned as ‘To some extent aware’. The remaining 30.5% Tirupati and 29% of youth in Vijayawada are ‘Not aware’ on this Right.
Level of Awareness among Youth on Reproductive Health Rights

Statement 12:

With regard to Right on “No discrimination for treatment for STD, HIV/AIDS”
45.5% in Tirupati and 47.5% in Vijayawada reported as ‘Fully aware’ and 31.5% in Tirupati and 26.5% of youth in Vijayawada expressed as ‘To some extent aware’.
The remaining 23% Tirupati and 26% in Vijayawada are ‘Not aware’ on this Right.

Statement 13:

With regard to Right on “Prevention and surveillance of sexual Violence Against Women (VAW)” 31% in Tirupati and 34% of youth in Vijayawada reported as ‘Fully aware’ and 34% each in Tirupati and Vijayawada expressed as ‘To some extent aware’. The remaining 35% Tirupati and 32% in Vijayawada are ‘Not aware’ on this Right.

Statement 14:

With regard to Right on “Action to eliminate harmful practices like FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)” only 15.5% in Tirupati and 17.5% of youth in Vijayawada reported as ‘Fully aware’ and 18% in Tirupati and 17.5% of youth in Vijayawada expressed as ‘To some extent aware’. The remaining bulk of more than 60% each in Tirupati and Vijayawada expressed as ‘Not aware’ on this Right.

Thus majority of youth both in Tirupati and Vijayawada are not aware on many of the ‘Reproductive Health’ Rights.
Index on Level of Awareness among Youth on 'Reproductive Health' Rights:

In order to estimate the overall awareness of youth on all the 14 'Reproductive Health' Rights an Index was developed based on the response of youth on the above aspects.

The total score for all the aspects lie between 14-42. The respondents are grouped into 3 categories based on independent score on all the 14 aspects as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Level of Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 23 and less</td>
<td>Less awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. 24 to 33</td>
<td>Moderate awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 24 and above</td>
<td>Full awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. 4.2: Index table on Level of Awareness on 'Reproductive Health' Rights:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Level of Awareness 'Reproductive Health' Rights</th>
<th>Tirupati</th>
<th>Vijayawada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Less awareness</td>
<td>83 (41.5%)</td>
<td>74 (37.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Moderate awareness</td>
<td>56 (28%)</td>
<td>57 (28.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Full awareness</td>
<td>61 (31.5%)</td>
<td>69 (34.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>200 (100%)</td>
<td>200 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Index on Level of Awareness on 'Reproductive Health' Rights

As per index on level of awareness of 'Reproductive Health' Rights, it is disheartening to notice that only one third of youth expressed 'Full awareness' (31% in Tirupati and 34% in Vijayawada) on 'Reproductive Health' Rights. Another 28% of youth in each Tirupati and Vijayawada reported 'Moderate awareness'. The remaining 41% in Tirupati and 37% of the youth in Vijayawada expressed 'Less awareness' on 'Reproductive Health' Rights.

In spite of heavy propaganda on 'Reproductive Health' Rights through electronic and print media channels, the information is not reached to many youth. This shows the importance of including sexual education in regular syllabus in schools and colleges. Further special awareness programmes are to be organized at ward level in all Municipalities and Corporations to educate out of School/College youth on knowledge and practice of 'Reproductive Health' Rights.