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Introduction

You're Never Too Young to Change the World

~ Lucía Gómez García

The Youth today have a wide array of opportunities and means of expression available. The world is gradually becoming more open and inclusive, as we ford our way forward, questioning barriers that withhold freedom and our basic human rights. We have umpteen ways of expanding our knowledge and learning about new ideas, creating our own concepts and ideologies from experiences and observations, perhaps more so with the expanse in internet usage, which has allowed information to travel to almost every part of the globe, and even to outer space. It has helped us come closer and helped bridge the geographical gap between communities and spread awareness on issues that concern all of us, as one human family. A lot of this has been achieved with the growing emphasis and awareness of human rights among the people, and especially among the youth.

The Human Rights, an ancient concept, is best understood as provided under Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Right's which states that, 'Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. That we are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible and guarded by law.' Nations around the world follows these principal to ensure the wellbeing of its citizens and to protect their natural rights in the best possible way.

Young people must be aware of their rights and means to protect and promote their wellbeing and the rights of others.

These Human Rights also encompass our inherent right to sexual health and wellbeing as human beings, which are often misunderstood, overlooked, condemned and suppressed by families, society, cultural traditions and norms, political or religious leaders and so on. Many people may be aware of these concepts, but may not fully understand the meaning or how it affects their own lives.

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights or SRHR are therefore, fundamental in assuring wholistic human growth and thereby, ensuring the enforcement of the idea of Human Rights for the freedom and development of each individual, irrespective of their social, economic or physical identity.

These rights are essential because in order to enjoying safe and satisfying sexual lives, young people must be aware of their rights and means to protect and promote their wellbeing and the rights of others.



For example, everyone has a right to dignity, bodily safety, and access to health information and services. But only when these rights are legally enforceable, and when people are aware of them, can they choose whether or not to have sex, negotiate the use of condoms and contraceptives and seek the services they need in a safe environment.

Unfortunately, even as the nations are growing, expanding economically and transforming socially and, there are millions of young people who still remain vulnerable and isolated across world, and face abuses such as forced sex (often increasing the risk of HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancy), violence, Child Marriage, and stigma relating to their sexual behavior, which is an everyday reality for them.

Therefore, being aware of our rights allows us to not only protect ourselves and other but also to make the best decision for our own bodies, with freedom to be comfortable in our own skin without fear, insecurities, discrimination and isolation.

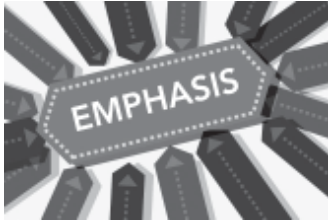
The 5th Edition of the Y's Eyes is based on YWCA's 2014 Quadrennium goal of 'Visioning with the Young', and therefore, it focuses on imparting awareness on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights for all, with special emphasis on the physical and sexual wellbeing of young people in India. The language, layout and content has been created keeping in view the perspective of today's young people, and it is meant to be used not just as reading material, but as a toolkit for training and advocacy. It has been carefully prepared to help serve the community and empower women, as has been the mission of the YWCA, always.





Key Objectives

The 5th Edition of Y's Eyes seeks to address the following objectives



➤ **Emphasis:**

Human Rights and the freedom of every individual's right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly, on matters related to their sexuality.

➤ **Understanding:**

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, the concept of consent and freedom from coercion, discrimination and violence.

➤ **Knowing:**

Our bodies and empowering young people to protect their health and sexuality

**KNOW
YOUR
RIGHTS**



➤ **Advocacy:**

Engaging young people to help promote social change leading to better sexual health and wellbeing for themselves and their community.

➤ **Action Plan:**

Creating Action Plan and Activities for the youth to apply their knowledge and engage them in gaining the satisfaction of making a positive difference in the world..





Acknowledgement

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And lastly, a very special thanks to the staff of YWCA of India who assisted with the editing and compilation of the Y's Eyes 5th Edition.





Chapter 1

Understanding Human Rights

1.1 HUMAN RIGHTS: The Genesis



When you look at the words ‘Human Rights’, they are made up of essentially two simple terms.

Human is defined as a member of the Homo sapiens species; a man, woman or child; a person; while Rights refer to things to which you are entitled or allowed; freedoms that are guaranteed. Therefore, as per the definition provided by United for Human Rights (UHR), human rights are fundamentally, ‘the rights you have simply because you are human.’

Human Rights are understood in different ways by different people across the world. Some are well informed while others may still be unaware of their importance or the existence of the rights entitled to them as result of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

UHR explain, ‘Human rights are based on the principle of respect for the individual. Their fundamental assumption is that each person is a moral and rational being who deserves to be treated with dignity. They are called human rights because they are universal. Whereas nations or specialized groups enjoy specific rights that apply only to them, human rights are the rights to which everyone is entitled—no matter who they are or where they live—simply because they are alive.’

However many people, are aware only of certain rights such as the freedom of speech and belief and perhaps a few other. And although these rights are as essential, the full scope of human rights is very broad. They include rights that allow choice and opportunity or the freedom to obtain a job, adopt a career, select a partner of one’s choice and raise children. They include the right to travel widely and the right to work gainfully without harassment, abuse and threat of arbitrary dismissal. They even embrace the right to leisure.

In ancient times, the concept of human rights was raw, unclear and was neither defined nor guaranteed. People had rights only because of their membership in a group, such as a family. Gradually, with each successive ruler, exploration and as the demand for equality and justice rose, the idea emerged that people should have certain freedoms.



In 539 BC, Cyrus the Great, after conquering the city of Babylon, did something totally unexpected—he freed all slaves to return home. Moreover, he declared people should choose their own religion. The Cyrus Cylinder, a clay tablet containing his statements, is the first human rights declaration in history.

The idea of human rights spread quickly to India, Greece and eventually Rome.



And that idea, in the wake of World War II, resulted finally in the document called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the thirty rights to which all people are entitled.

Some of the important years in the history of Human Rights are:

1215: The Magna Carta —

It gave people new rights and made the king subject to the law.

1628: The Petition of Right —

It set out the rights of the people in Britain

1776: The United States Declaration of Independence —

It proclaimed the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

1789: The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen —

It is a document of France, stating that all citizens are equal under the law.

1948: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights —

The first document listing the 30 rights to which everyone is entitled.



Today nations across the globe, especially those that abide by the principals and treaties of the United Nations, include the Human Rights aspect while making or implementing laws that affect the citizens.

However, since the document is a declaration and not legally binding on the countries, many Human Rights violation continue despite efforts from the international and local communities and societies.

Therefore, a lot needs to be done to create an inclusive and free world where human dignity and respect are insured for everyone, for their growth and proper development and thereby, ensuring progress for all.

**ALL HUMAN BEINGS
ARE BORN
FREE AND EQUAL**

(quote from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)



1.2 Human Rights and SRHR

Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health relate to multiple Human Rights, which include,

- The Right to Life
- The Right to be Free from Torture
- The Right to Health
- The Right to Privacy
- The Right to Education
- 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 too. Therefore, States are obligated to respect, protect and fulfill rights related to women's sexual and reproductive health.

The Right to Health which implies, the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health maintains that women are entitled to reproductive health care services, goods and facilities that are:

- a) Available in adequate numbers;
- b) Accessible physically and economically;
- c) Accessible without discrimination; and
- d) Of good quality.

Despite these obligations, violations of women's sexual and reproductive health rights are very frequent all over the world. These take varied forms such as denial of access to services that only women require, or poor quality services, subjecting women's access to services to third party authorization, and performance of procedures related to women's reproductive and sexual health without the woman's consent, including forced sterilization, forced virginity examinations, and forced abortion. Women's sexual and reproductive health rights are also at risk when they are subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM) and early marriage.

**WOMEN'S
RIGHTS
ARE
HUMAN
RIGHTS**

Violation of women's sexual and reproductive health rights are often engrained in societal values on women's sexuality, that is to say, **women are often valued based on their ability to reproduce.** Early marriage and pregnancy, or repeated pregnancies spaced too closely together, usually in an effort to produce male offspring because of the preference for sons, has a devastating impact on women's health with sometimes fatal consequences.



Women are also often blamed for infertility, suffering ostracism from their family and society, and being subjected to various human rights violations as a result.

Article 16 of the CEDAW guarantees women equal rights in deciding “freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights.”

Also, Article 10 of CEDAW specifies that women’s right to education includes “access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.”

The Beijing Platform for Action, under Women and Health states that “the human rights of women include their right to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.”

The CEDAW Committee’s General Recommendation provides that States priorities the “prevention of unwanted pregnancy through family planning and sex education.”

The CESCR General Comment 14 has explained that the provision of maternal health services is comparable to a core obligation which cannot be derogated from under any circumstances, and the States have to the immediate obligation to take deliberate, concrete, and targeted steps towards fulfilling the right to health in the context of pregnancy and childbirth.



Chapter 2

Sexuality

2.1 Understanding Sexuality

- Sexuality among humans is a natural and integral dimension of our existence; and sexual activity is only one aspect of it.
- Sexuality involves many aspects of being human. The four major components of sexuality are:
 - a) Sensuality
 - b) Intimacy and relationships
 - c) Gender/sexual identity
 - d) Sexual health
- People experience and express sexuality throughout their lives through different ways and means.
- They may experience sexuality through their physical feelings, emotions, thoughts, identity and relationships.
- The idea of sexuality is often shaped by cultural norms, individual experiences, family or society, physical attributes, and so on.
- Being aware about ones sexual identity is important since:
 - a) It allows young people to become comfortable with their Body image and sexual preference
 - b) Discussing sexual issues
 - c) Understand the importance of consent
 - d) Mutuality and respect in sexual relationships
- Sexuality, when expressed in a mutually consensual and respectful way, with a partner, can enhance happiness, well – being, health, and quality of life – and thus, fostering intimacy and trust between partners.



**MUTUAL RESPECT
IS WHAT
STRONG RELATIONSHIPS
IN EVERY AREA OF LIFE
ARE BUILT ON**



2.2. Gender Norms for the Sexes

Gender norms are the way people act, what they do and say, to express being a girl or a boy, a woman or a man. These characteristics are shaped by society to structure one's position and way of behavior with others.

Gender roles are varied and diverse across cultures, ethnic groups, beliefs, social classes and so on. But every culture has gender roles — they all have expectations for the way women and men, girls and boys, should dress, behave, look or act.

Children learn gender roles from an early age — from their parents, friends and relatives, their religion, and their culture, as well as the outside world, including television, magazines, and other media. As children grow, they adopt behaviors that are rewarded by love and praise. They stop or hide behaviors that are ridiculed, shamed, or punished. This happens early in life. By age three, children have usually learned to prefer toys and clothes that are “appropriate” to their gender.

Since gender norms govern much of an individual's personal and social space, it usually impacts their well-being, including aspects of their sexual health as well as access and freedom to exercise these rights.

Gender norms are instilled in individuals through the process of socialization, and therefore, these are not innate or natural and can change, especially, if they hamper the growth or restrict an individual's opportunity to a healthy and fruitful life.

The 21st century has seen a shift in gender roles due to multiple factors such as new family structures, education, media, and several others. With time, many young people across the globe, regardless of their sexes, are embracing greater gender equality by changing their perspectives, becoming more inclusive and flexible in their understanding of gender roles, which can help people get more opportunities and develop to their fullest capacity as a human being.

Therefore, transforming the way we think about gender norms is a key step towards achieving gender equality because:

- Equality between Males and Females is a matter of Human Rights as stated in Article 1.
- It helps foster the growth of a healthy and prosperous community
- Gender Equality is one of the key development goals of the United Nations
- More importantly, it helps combat certain issues that plague our society such as HIV/AIDS, Child Marriage, unwanted pregnancy, and female feticide, which mostly affect the young population.





2.3 Sexual Consent and Coercion

Consent is defined as permission for something to happen or agreement to do something. Thus, giving sexual consent means agreeing to have sex.

Every person has the right to allow or withhold **sexual consent**. A healthy relationship between partners allows them the freedom to express this right and respect their individual or mutual decision. A person has the right to change their mind about sexual consent at any given point of time.



Coercion on the other hand, refers to the use of force to persuade someone to do something that they are unwilling to do. Coercion is prohibited by law and the victimizer can be booked for criminal offence on being found guilty. However, in terms of Sexual Coercion, the societal norms and laws differ in each country.

Sexual Coercion occurs when someone attempts to force another person to engage in sexual activity against their will.

Although anyone is susceptible to sexual coercion, it is usually the women who are victims of sexual coercion, due to social or physical consequences. Sexual coercion is also an expression of violence against women.

Emotional Manipulation, deception, physical force or threats, intimidation and economic inducements are just some of the ways a person can be sexual coerced. Touching someone's body without their consent is also a form of sexual coercion.

Thus, sexual coercion is always a violation of human rights, no matter where, when or how it occurs.

Sexual Coercion occurs when someone attempts to force another person to engage in sexual activity against their will.

Sexual coercion can result in emotional and psychological problems, such as feelings of insecurity, isolation, severe depression. Besides, coercion also causes physical harm. Coerced sex is likely to result in unintended pregnancy, HIV infections or other STI (Sexually Transmitted Infections).

However, being aware of our rights and knowing the boundaries between what acceptable behavior is and what is not, and most importantly understanding the concept of consent helps reduce risks of sexual coercion.

Besides, various support groups and government help – lines exist which can help people facing instances of sexual coercion.

In conclusion, we must understand that there are various factors which affect a person's ability to consent to sex which is meaningful. A person's maturity, awareness about one's rights and control over basic aspect's of their life are some important conditions which are essential to making a well informed decision to allow or withhold sexual consent.

Therefore, it is essential to communicate properly and openly about one's preferences, to prevent infection and unwanted pregnancy, which is also part of meaningful consent.



2.4 Mutual Respect and Responsibility

Understanding one's choices, perspective and respecting the decisions they make for themselves is the first step to respecting an individual. Mutual respect is thus, the foundation for honesty, trust, and meaningful communication between individuals.

Mutual respect is therefore, an integral part of sexual consent.

Some of the factors which contribute to a mutually satisfying and responsible sexual relationship are as follows:

- Knowing that each partner has the same rights, and cooperating to ensure mutual respect, consent and responsibility
- Treating each other as equals – as people, and not just bodies
- Being aware of your desires and comfort level in a relationship
- Being honest with each other about feeling comfortable and communicating what each partner wants or does not want in a relationship
- Being aware and using safe and effective ways to protect yourself and your partner from unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

Each person can thus learn to develop better understanding, respect, responsibility and satisfaction in one's sexual relationships with their partner.

**WE ARE NOT
ALL THE SAME
BUT WE ARE ALL
EQUAL.**





Chapter 3

Understanding the Body and Puberty

3.1 Positive Body Image and Building Self Esteem



Body image is the way you see yourself and imagine how you look. Having a positive body image means that, most of the time, you see yourself accurately, you feel comfortable in your body, and you feel good about the way you look.

Your body image can be influenced by your own beliefs and attitudes as well as those of society, the media and peer groups.

That is to say, we get both positive and negative messages about our bodies from family and friends all the time — starting from when we're very young. For example, we may develop a love of exercise and a sense of being strong and capable if our parents share their own enjoyment of physical activity with us. On the other hand, we may develop a negative body image if our parents or friends criticize the way we look, and ridicule or condemn aspects of our body.

Besides, body image is also influenced by the natural aging process and our life experience. We have different feelings about our bodies when our bodies change. Certain times in life, like puberty or menopause and andropause, are key times when a person's body image may change. If people are hurt, sick, or disabled, their body images may be affected, too.

However, a negative body image is self – depreciating and harmful to us and affects our, mental, physical and social well – being.

It is important to remember that you cannot change some aspects of your appearance. Height, muscle and bone structure are determined by your genes and endowed at birth.

Thus, there is no right or wrong when it comes to body shape or appearance. Everybody is different in body size and shape and appearance and we can celebrate this diversity and individuality.

*"If You Want To
Soar
In Life
You Must First Learn to
F.L.Y.
(First Love Yourself)"*

~ Mark Sterling



3.2 Ten Steps to Positive Body Image

One list cannot automatically tell you how to turn negative body thoughts into positive body image, but it can help you think about new ways of looking more healthfully and happily at yourself and your body. The more you do that, the more likely you are to feel good about who you are and the body you naturally have.

- Appreciate all that your body can do. Every day your body carries you closer to your dreams. Celebrate all of the amazing things your body does for you —running, dancing, breathing, laughing, dreaming, etc.
- Keep a top-10 list of things you like about yourself — things that aren't related to how much you weigh or what you look like. Read your list often. Add to it as you become aware of more things to like about you.
- Remind yourself that “true beauty” is not simply skin-deep. When you feel good about yourself and who you are, you carry yourself with a sense of confidence, self-acceptance, and openness that makes you beautiful regardless of whether you physically look like a supermodel. Beauty is a state of mind, not a state of your body.
- Look at yourself as a whole person. When you see yourself in a mirror or in your mind, choose not to focus on specific body parts. See yourself as you want others to see you — as a whole person.
- Surround yourself with positive people. It is easier to feel good about yourself and your body when you are around others who are supportive and who recognize the importance of liking yourself just as you naturally are.
- Shut down those voices in your head that tell you your body is not “right” or that you are a “bad” person. You can overpower those negative thoughts with positive ones. The next time you start to tear yourself down, build yourself back up with a few quick affirmations that work for you.
- Wear clothes that are comfortable and that make you feel good about your body. Work with your body, not against it.
- Become a critical viewer of social and media messages. Pay attention to images, slogans, or attitudes that make you feel bad about yourself or your body and discuss why they affect you so.
- Do something nice for yourself — something that lets your body know you appreciate it. For example, take a bubble bath, make time for a nap or find a peaceful place outside to relax.





- Use the time and energy that you might have spent worrying about food, calories, and your weight to do something to help others. Sometimes reaching out to other people can help you feel better about yourself and can make a positive change in our world.





3.3 Understanding Puberty

The human body is beautiful in all its forms and functions. Every person deserves to grow and feel a sense of familiarity and confidence about their body. Understanding how our body functions and learning about how to take care of it at each stage of our life helps build self-confidence.

Most children are taken care of by their parents. However, as children grow into adolescence, it becomes an essential responsibility of the young adults to know the changes that take place and how to adapt in ways that are most suitable for proper physical and mental development. These changes are caused due to chemicals produced in the body, known as Hormones and this time of change is termed as Puberty.

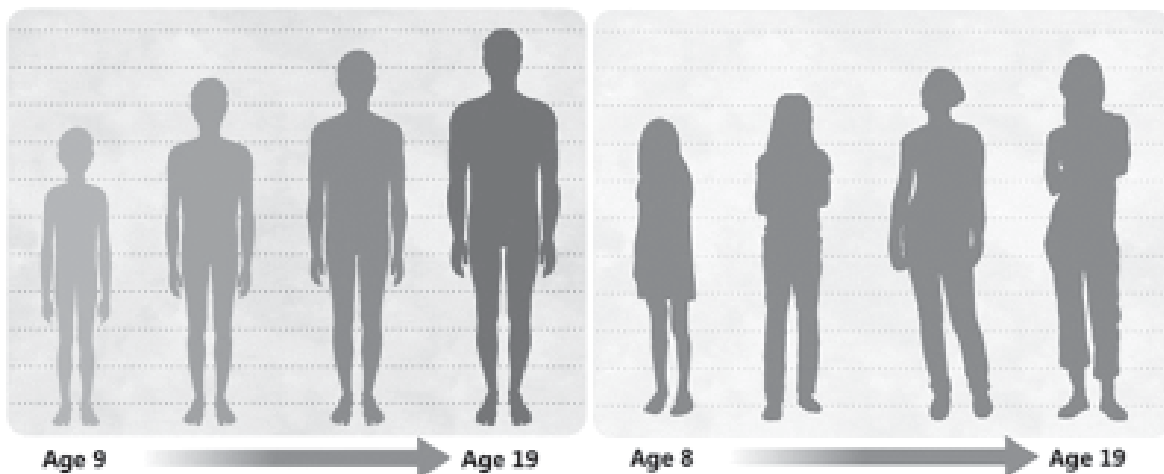
Puberty for both boys and girls may occur between the age of 9 – 19 years, however it may occur early or later for people depending on their genes or physical aspects.

Other than the visible physical changes that occur in adolescents, the sexual and reproductive organs also begin to mature at this stage.

For instance, Girls begin their menstruation, gradually develop breasts and there is growth of pubic hair, while puberty in boys include deepening of voice, growth of body and facial hair and production of sperm.

Thus, puberty is a time of rapid physical growth and taking care of one's body and mental health is especially important. Young people are often expected to assume more responsibility as they reach this stage and in most cultures, they are allowed certain freedom to make good decisions for themselves.

Following a proper diet, insuring hygiene and regular physical exercise are essential for proper growth of an individual.





3.4 Healthy Nutrition and Physical Activity

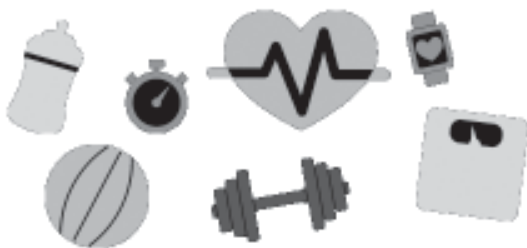
Good nutrition is critical during the teenage years to ensure healthy growth and development. A healthy diet must meet the changing nutritional needs of a growing teenager. Besides, every young adult must engage in physical activity such as outdoor and indoor games or exercises which help improve their physical and mental capabilities.

Most nutrition guidelines provide that adolescents should aim to enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods such as:

- Vegetables and Fruit of different types and colours, and include legumes and beans
- Grain (cereal) foods, mostly whole grain and/or high cereal fiber varieties, such as cereals, oats, barley, etc.
- Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, soya bean, nuts and seeds
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat
- Drink plenty of water
- Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt and added sugars, such as carbonated drinks, fried foods etc.



Besides physical exercise is just as important as nutrition, for both girls and boys



- Moderate amounts of daily physical activity are recommended for people of all ages.
- This amount can be obtained in longer sessions of moderately intense activities, such as brisk walking for 30 minutes, or in shorter sessions of more intense activities, such as jogging or playing basketball for 15-20 minutes.
- Greater amounts of physical activity are even more beneficial, up to a point. Excessive amounts of physical activity can lead to injuries



Some of the benefits of physical activity are:

- Helps build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints.
- Helps control weight, build lean muscle, and reduce fat.
- Prevents or delays the development of high blood pressure
- Enhances psychological well-being.
- May reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety and improve mood





Chapter 4

Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

4.1 Understanding Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)

Depending on various factors, individuals in a relationship with a good understanding of their sexuality, preferences and body image can lead deeply satisfying and fulfilling lives.

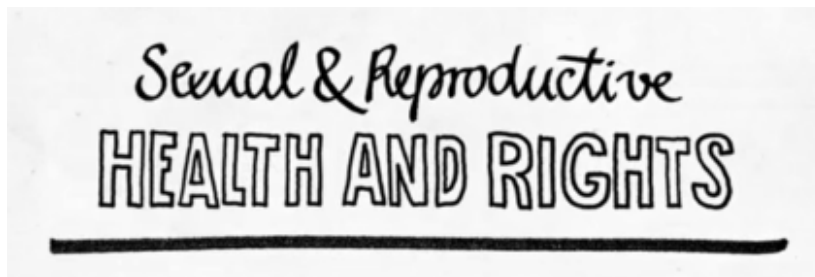
The two ways of improving ones sexual and reproductive well – being is by:

1. Ensuring that they have access to correct information from reliable sources, and services in their vicinity
2. Create more just social conditions, such as gender equality, and respect for human rights that enables people to control the circumstance in which they make their choices.

The aspect of sexual and Reproductive well – being is the subject matter of SRHR.

The term is made of two essential aspects:

- Sexual Health and Rights and
- Reproductive Health and Rights





4.2 Sexual Health and Rights



Sexual Health refers to a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being related to sexuality: not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.

Thus, **Sexual Rights** then refer to embracing human rights that are already recognized in national laws, international human rights documents and other international agreements. These include the right of all persons, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, to:

- Receive the highest attainable standard of health in relation to sexuality, including access to sexual and Reproductive healthcare services
- Seek and impart information in relation to sexuality
- Receive sexuality education
- Have respect for bodily integrity
- Have a free choice of partner
- Decide to be sexually active or not
- Have consensual sexual relations
- Have consensual marriage
- Decide whether or not and when to have children
- Pursue a satisfying, safe and pleasurable sexual life



The responsible exercise of human rights requires that all persons respect the rights of others



4.3 Reproductive Health and Rights

Reproductive Health which means a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes.

Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.



Implicit in this last condition are the rights of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law, and the right of access to appropriate healthcare services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant.



Interlined with this concept is the **Reproductive Rights** refers to embracing human rights which are accepted under national laws, international human rights documents and other consensus documents.

These rights rest on the recognition of the basic rights for all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so, and the right to the highest attainable standard of sexual and reproductive health.

They also include the right of all to make decisions concerning reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence, as expressed in human rights documents.

So what does it take to meet the right to sexual and reproductive health?

In addition to identifying critical components of SRHR, the ICPD (International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action) makes recommendations for ensuring these rights are met, including:

- Freedom from discrimination;
- Universal access to education;
- Control of one's fertility, including the choice of whether and when to marry or have children and protection from forced sterilization;
- Protection of the family structure, with the understanding that there is a great diversity of family structures that are equally deserving of respect and safeguarding;



- Recognition in policy and practice of the links between sexual and reproductive health, development, and the environment;
- Prevention of early or forced marriage and inclusion of adolescents in planning and implementation of services and programs;
- Engagement of men and boys;
- Respect of the sexual orientation and gender identity of all individuals; and
- Full funding at the national and global levels to ensure universal access to basic health care, including SRH.



Young people can help building awareness on these issues by:

- Educating others in their families and communities
- Promoting the policies and practices that they believe are just
- Helping plan and implement programs
- Encourage their friends to join campaigns.



**SRHR
ARE
HUMAN
RIGHTS**



4.4 Child Marriage and its Repercussions:

UNICEF defines child marriage as marriage before 18 years of age and considers this practice as a violation of human rights. In India, the legal age for marriage is 18 years for women, 21 years for men, according to the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA) of 2007.

India has one of the highest number of child brides in the world. It is estimated that 47% of girls (almost half of the female population) in India are married before their 18th birthday.

States like Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh still have average age of marriage below the legal age of eighteen for females. While fewer Indian girls are marrying before the age of 15, rates of marriage have increased for girls aged between 15 to 18 years of age.

**1 IN 9 GIRLS
IS FORCED INTO
MARRIAGE
BEFORE HER
15TH BIRTHDAY.**

**ALMOST
39,000 GIRLS
BECOME CHILD BRIDES
EVERY SINGLE DAY,
OFTEN MARRIED TO
MUCH OLDER MEN.**

There are many causes of child marriage in India and multiple barriers to its elimination. Poverty, weak enforcement of laws, patriarchal social norms intended to ensure family honour are significant factors that increase the risk of girl being married off while still a child. Also, girls from poor households are more likely to marry as children, since marriage becomes a solution to reduce the size of the family. The cost of marriage plays a big role in families sliding further into poverty, and these high costs contribute to girls being forced to

marry when other ceremonies are taking place in the family or when older siblings are being married.

Girls married as children are more likely to:

- Drop out of school, have a low-paid job and limited decision-making power at home.
A girl with 10 years of education has a six times lower chance of being pushed into marriage before she is 18.
- Face violence, abuse and exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases because they have fewer skills and less negotiating power. Nearly 13 per cent of married girls between 15-19 years of age experience sexual violence by their husbands compared with 10 per cent of women experiencing such violence between the age group of 30-39.
- Become pregnant as adolescents. One in six girls begins childbearing between the ages of 15 and 19 years. Early pregnancy increases the risk of delivery complications and maternal and child mortality. The Infant Mortality Rate is 76





per cent for women aged less than 20 years, compared with 50 per cent for women aged 20-29 years.

The national Ministry of Women and Child Development, as the nodal agency for women and children, has developed a convergent national strategy and is currently drafting a plan of action on child marriage to guide all states in the implementation of strategies to prevent the problem. Key components of the strategy and draft action plan include: law enforcement, quality education and other opportunities, changing mindsets and social norms, empowering adolescents, producing and sharing knowledge and data, and monitoring.

The YWCA of India in collaboration with PRIA (Society for Participatory Research in Asia) has taken initiatives to conduct an elaborate research and plan an intervention program in Sonipat, Haryana to address the issue of Child Marriage.



The Government of India is also implementing national programmes aimed at protecting and promoting the development of children, while states are supporting these initiatives through state-level schemes. However, many of the programmes focus on addressing financial vulnerability through cash transfer schemes to keep girls in school.

At the same time, there is a legal framework to prevent child marriage and protect children:

- ❑ The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 makes it illegal for girls to marry under 18 years and for boys less than 21 years. Child marriage can be made voidable by the child but within two years of becoming an adult.
- ❑ Child marriage is a punishable offence with a fine up to INR 100,000, or up to two years of imprisonment, or both. It is a non-cognizable and non-bailable offence.
- ❑ Dowry was prohibited in 1961 by the Dowry Prohibition Act
- ❑ Other laws that may provide protection to a child bride include the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, the Domestic Violence Act, 2005, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012.



#ChildNotBride



4.5 Sexually Transmitted Infections and Contraceptive Methods

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS

Sexually Transmissible Infection (STI) is an infection that can be passed on through vaginal, anal or oral sex. Most STIs are transmitted through the exchange of sexual fluids, but some can be passed on through skin to skin genital contact or passed to a baby before it is born, during child birth or at the time of breastfeeding. Most STI's are curable, but not all.

It is important to get to know our own body, and to know what is normal and healthy for you. When something seems different, it is important to get it checked by a trained medical professional. It is important to keep in mind that the body won't always show signs and symptoms, and that's why it is important to have regular STI testing for anyone who is sexually active whether or not they have any symptoms.

Some of the common types of STI's are as follows:

STI	Symptoms	Curability	Availability of Vaccine
HIV/AIDS	HIV does not have symptoms in its early stages. It usually leads to AIDS. People affected with AIDS suffer from various infections and cancers which are caused due to weakening of the immunity.	No, AIDS is a chronic and ultimately fatal disease Treatment (Antiretroviral Therapy) can slow the progress of the disease.	No
Hepatitis B	Some people experience flu – like symptoms, jaundice and dark coloured urine. Some may not experience any symptoms.	No, But the body usually clears the infection by itself. Proper care and medical supervision should be followed.	Yes
Herpes Simplex Virus	Recurrent episodes of painful sores on genital or anus.	No, But symptoms can be controlled through treatment	No



STI	Symptoms	Curability	Availability of Vaccine
Human Papiloma Virus (HPV)	Patient can be a carrier for a disease or infection but may experiences no symptoms. But the diseased can transfer the infection.	No, But symptoms can be controlled through treatment. Strains can develop into cervical cancer among women.	Yes, Vaccine prevents strains causing cervical cancers and genital warts.
Syphilis	Stage 1: Painless sores on the genitals, rectum or mouth. Stage 2: Skin rashes, lesions on mucus membranes, fever, and malaise.	Yes, If treated at an early stage. Without treatment, infection remains in the body. Can cause damage to internal organs and become fatal.	No

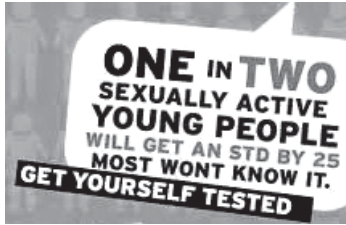
Some other general symptoms that might accompany STIs are as follows:

- Sores or blisters on the genitals on or around the anus, or mouth
- Irregular growths (warts) in genital area
- Vaginal or penile discharge (may be unusual-smelling or discoloured)
- Genital itching
- Pain with urination or having a bowel movement
- Pain with intercourse
- Vaginal bleeding or spotting after sexual intercourse
- Lower abdominal pain
- Pain or swelling of glands in groin area
- Rash

Proper treatment can often reduce symptoms and slow the progress of those STI's that cannot be cured.



People can prevent acquiring of STIs by the following ways:



- Getting tested for STI regularly by a proper health care provider
- If tests are positive, notify your partner about it
- Also, insure that your partner is tested and if required treated for STIs
- Safe sex through use of condoms or abstinence
- Obtaining vaccination for STIs which can be prevented
- Open communication with your partner on these issues.
- Spreading awareness on this issue among your family and community

Safe sex is by far, the best way to protect oneself against STI. Some of the contraceptive methods available in India are as follows:

- Male Condoms:
Double protection against most STI, HIV/AIDS and Pregnancy
- Female Condoms:
Enables women to protect themselves and their partners
Protects against most STIs, HIV/AIDS and Pregnancy
- Oral Contraceptives (Pills):
Contains synthetic hormones which prevent unwanted pregnancy
Does not prevent STIs
- Intrauterine Devices (UIDs):
It is inserted by a trained medical provider.
Prevents pregnancy for a period of time.
Does not prevent STIs





4.6 Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and the Law

The interconnection of human rights is reflected in every element of SRH and the rights, policies and funding required for ensuring universal access to SRHR.

A number of human rights documents—both international law and global consensus documents form the basis of these rights.

Some of the International Treaties and Laws relating to SRHR are as follows:



- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Articles 12.1, 15.1, 23.2, and 23.3)
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: (Articles 9.1, 17.1, 7, and 23.4)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Amnesty International's focus on Women's Human Rights

Thus, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights are central achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Similarly, the Constitution of India provides provisions which include the SRHR recommendations provided at the International treaties.

Basic Human Rights	Constitutional Provision	Subjects the Right Covers
Right to Life	No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedures established by law.	Maternal mortality, safe motherhood, female feticide, gender-based violence and rape laws.
Right to Liberty and Security	Right to personal liberty or the 'right to do as one pleases within the law' as long as they are deemed essential for the full development of human personality. Right to a safe and healthy sex life and right to privacy are also part of personal liberties, although they have met with a lot of controversies.	Protection against sexual abuse and exploitation of children, women and men, forced sterilization and abortion, gender-based violence.



Basic Human Rights	Constitutional Provision	Subjects the Right Covers
<p>Right to Equality and Freedom From All Forms of Discrimination</p>	<p>Equality before law and prohibits the State from discriminating against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.</p> <p>The State can positively discriminate and make special provisions for women and children for the advancement of those who are disadvantaged socially and educationally.</p> <p>The Courts have determined the scope of the right to equality in relation to sex, sexual orientation and HIV.</p>	<p>Gender-based violence, discrimination in access to information, education and services related to sexual and reproductive health.</p>
<p>Right to Privacy</p>	<p>Right to be left alone.</p> <p>A citizen has a right to safeguard the privacy of his own, his family, marriage, procreation, motherhood, childbearing and education among other matters.</p>	<p>Includes issues such as sexual health services, medical records, protection of information concerning HIV status and information related to sexual choices and sexuality.</p>
<p>Right to Information and Education</p>	<p>Freedom of speech and expression as well as the right to education.</p>	<p>Useful in providing information that is gender-sensitive, pluralistic and free from stereotypes, discrimination against pregnant girls in education and so on.</p>
<p>Right to Marry and Have a Family</p>	<p>PLHIV have the moral and legal duty to inform the prospective spouse of their condition.</p> <p>The right to marry still exists among PLHIV despite the initial reservation.</p>	<p>Helps address issues like forced marriage, forced pregnancy and sterilization.</p>



Basic Human Rights	Constitutional Provision	Subjects the Right Covers
Right to Decide Whether or When to Have Children	<p>Right to procreate as well as to abstain from procreating with woman having the right to privacy, dignity and bodily integrity respected at all times.</p> <p>This includes reproductive choices such as woman's right to refuse participation in sexual activity or alternatively the insistence on use of contraceptive methods.</p>	<p>Addresses issues relating to unmet need for information, education and services related to SRH, safe motherhood and safe abortion.</p> <p>Access to services that are available, affordable, acceptable and convenient.</p> <p>Campaign for services that offer the widest possible range of safe, effective and acceptable methods of fertility.</p>
Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health	<p>Protect the health of its citizens by upholding right to live with human dignity.</p> <p>Duty of the state (through government hospital/care centres) to provide timely medical treatment to a person in need of such treatment results.</p>	<p>Access to a full range of quality SRH services.</p> <p>Protection against medical negligence.</p> <p>Prevention, diagnosis and treatment of STI and HIV/AIDS.</p>

Some of the policies adopted in India with encompass SRH rights are as follows:

- The National Population Policy, 2000
- The National AIDS Prevention and Control Policy 2002
- The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), 2005
- National Youth Policy, 2014
- The National Adolescent Health Strategy (2014)
- Domestic Violence Act, 2005
- Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006
- The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Amendment Bill 2006
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (MTP) 1971 and Amendment of 2002





4.7 Ending Violence Against Women (VAW):

Violence of any form refers to physical, psychological and/or sexual harm which is caused without the consent of the person. Therefore, **violence against women** (or gender based violence) is, collectively, violent acts that are primarily or exclusively committed against women. Sometimes considered a hate crime, this type of violence targets a specific group with the victim's gender as a primary motive.



Violence against women and girls is a grave violation of human rights. Its impact ranges from immediate to long-term multiple physical, sexual and mental consequences for women and girls, including death. An estimate of one in three women in the world are beaten, coerced into sexual activity or otherwise abused by an intimate partner during their lifetime.

Some of the forms of Violence against women include molestation, sexual harassment, marital rape, female trafficking, and female genital mutilation among many others. These issues are a common problem across the globe.

The consequence of such violence includes:

- Serious pain and injuries, such as broken bones, burns, black eye, etc. which may endure for a lifetime and can turn fatal too.
- Mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and eating disorder.
- Sexual dysfunctionality including painful sex, lack of desire or fear of becoming intimate.
- Reproductive health problems, including miscarriages, susceptibility to STIs, HIV/AIDS and/or unplanned pregnancy



Thus, gender based violence creates mistrust, inequality, fear and insecurity in families, schools, community and workplace.

Some of the effective strategies to address this issue of gender based violence which we can adopt and practice are as follows:

- Changing the Way You Think:
 - Changing our attitude and conducting prevention efforts
 - Engaging men in efforts to change cultural attitudes about masculinity and violent behaviors





- Integrating gender education, including information about gender based violence, into formal and informal education
 - Introducing campaigns, such as annual 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women.
 - Educating women and girls about their legal rights
 - Helping end child marriage
- Providing Services:

Women who face violence need to have access to counseling centers, support networks, legal aid, health care, emergency contraception options and a place which provides safe shelter.

- Providing Training:

Trained health care providers and counselors can help detect abuse and assist victims by offering medical, psychological and legal support.

Besides, training can help people work on spreading awareness on these issues and promote advocacy action.

- Changing the law:

- Providing more political commitment to take action, which is backed by action and commitment to allocating adequate resource to make it effective.
- Implementing laws that particularly address the issue of violence and ensuring they are implemented and practiced.
- Creation of special courts and police units which are trained to handle such issues with sensitivity.



Finally, expanding our knowledge and being aware of our rights and laws is the best defense against gender based violence.

Also, it is essential that when we see it, we must be able to recognize violence and report it immediately to the appropriate authority.

**"Gender equality is
not a woman's issue,
it is a human issue.
It affects us all."**



Chapter 5

The Way Forward: Advocacy by the Youth

Sexual and Reproductive health rights are central to the attainment of gender justice in our society and for insuring the welfare of young people. Thus, it encompasses the right of all individuals to make decisions concerning their sexual activity and reproduction free from discrimination, coercion, and violence. Specifically, it provides 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.

One kernel is felt in a hogshead; one drop of water helps to swell the ocean; a spark of fire helps to give light to the world. None are too small, too feeble, too poor to be of service. Think of this and act.

But more importantly, the young people must first be knowledgeable and possess correct information about SRHR, and then insure that it is passed on to their peers and juniors is essential for not only imbibing these facts but also, helps in spreading awareness and empowering people to live fulfilling lives.

5.1 Benefits of Knowing SRHR

1. Education:

Girls and boys often lack access to information and services that would improve their sexual and reproductive health and educational status.

When they are healthy and their rights are fulfilled, they can go to school, learn and gain the skills and resources they need to be healthy, productive and empowered adults.



Thus, post – 2015 goals and targets should address and measure the strong connections between sexual and reproductive health and rights and education.

2. Economic:

Realizing SRHR increases rates of education, reduces other healthcare costs, promotes gender equality, provides more productive and healthy workforce, and leads to economic gains.





3. Health:

Universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services would enable individuals to lead healthier lives and contribute to better global health and achievement of our countries development goals.



4. Gender Equality:

Sustainable, meaningful, and rights-driven development will not be possible without ensuring gender equality, including sexual and reproductive health and rights for all.

When women and girls do not have full access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, their ability to contribute economically, socially and politically to their communities is severely constrained.



5. Environment:

Meeting the sexual and reproductive health and rights needs of every individual is essential in promoting healthy families, healthy communities and a healthy planet.

Women who can plan their family size are more resilient to climate disruption, more likely to participate in local conservation efforts and better able to manage resources for their families.



Thus, protecting the health and rights of individuals and protecting our planet go hand-in-hand.



5.2 Our Priority List: Goal Oriented Development

The path to victory is a long one, but each of us can accelerate the pace at which our world can become sensitive and inclusive, as we transform ourselves to become a catalyst for this change. Some of the ways of achieving the goals we have set for ourselves and ensuring SRHR leads to gender justice for all are as follows:

- Ensure that universal access to sexual and reproductive health services for all, including adolescents, is included as a core strategy in broader efforts to address education.
- Ensure that all girls complete free, high-quality secondary school, prioritizing the most marginalized (e.g., rural, poor, married and at risk of marriage, disabled or conflict-affected girls).
- Ensure the provision of and access to rights-based comprehensive sexuality education for all girls and boys.
- Eliminate violence, sexual exploitation and harassment at schools and in colleges.
- Provide, monitor and evaluate universal access to youth-friendly health information and services, including comprehensive, rights-based sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health, for all girls and boys—in and out of school and regardless of marital or pregnancy status.
- Improve the links between schools and youth-friendly health services.
- End the practice of child, early and forced marriages, harmful traditional practices, including female genital mutilation/cutting, for all girls by 2030.
- Investing in voluntary family planning services can lead to a demographic dividend—the accelerated growth of a country’s economy. This occurs when fertility rates decline due to investments in SRHR, changing the population’s age structure.
- When declining fertility rates are coupled with investments in education and other social policies, the next generation of highly educated youth contributes more to the workforce, as well as becomes the next generation of consumers.
- Build the capacity of primary healthcare systems to deliver quality, integrated SRH services through maternal, newborn and child health, HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and non-communicable disease programs.
- Prioritize the SRH needs of poor and marginalized groups, including adolescents and people living with HIV/AIDS, and address inequities in access to quality SRH services.
- Ensure the supply of SRH commodities, including a full range of safe, effective contraceptives, including male and female condoms, and increase funding to cover existing shortfalls.



- Ensure that all sources of law adhere to principles of gender equality, support effective implementation and enforcement and expand access to justice for all women, including through customary practices.
- Increase female participation in local, regional, national, and international decision-making bodies related to climate disruption, resource management, agriculture, and the environment.
- Reduce exposure to toxic substances and improve water and sanitation to decrease infant and child mortality and improve women's health, including maternal health.
- Keep women and girls in school, and ensure the inclusion of agricultural, environmental, and economic education in both male and female curricula.

Only in societies where men and women have equal rights and responsibilities will reproductive rights be equally shared by all.

BECAUSE NEITHER OF US



CAN DO IT ALONE

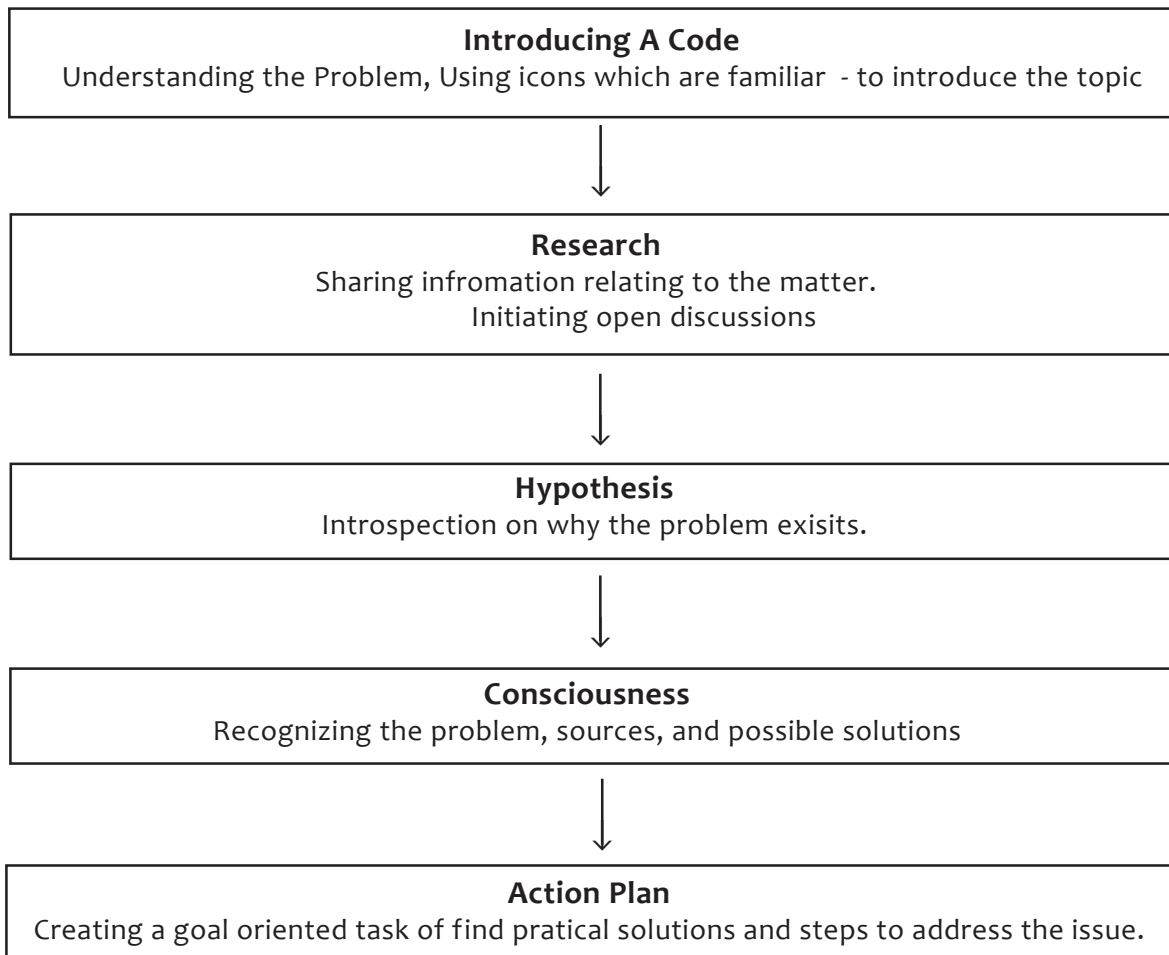


5.3 Creating an Action Plan

The best way to ensure that what we have learnt is passed on and the momentum continues is by following the 'Each One Teach One' mantra.

The youth today wants meaning and purpose to everything they learn, see or do. Providing this clarity and understanding the true context of our advocacy and being able to filter it down to our group is essential to creating an impact on the lives of young people. The methods of preaching and dictating no longer work effectively and therefore, we need to find more innovative, interactive and engaging methods to reach out to the young people. One of the methods of doing this is by following the problem solving methodology.

The steps for conducting a workshop based on this principle are as follows.



The best way to reinforce and create an interactive session is by allowing the participants to first know their group members and to come by a comfort level where each individual feels inclusive and respected to be able to share their ideas or thoughts.



A good facilitator will be able to conduct a session in such a way that the participants are free to share their views without the feeling of being judged or questioned; and allows them enough freedom to ponder over their own questions and create an effective environment for health debating and brainstorming, to come up with practical solutions.

Some of the ingredients required for conducting an effective workshop are as follows:

- **Privacy:** Personal matters discussed within the group are confidential and stay in the group. We don't use the things we hear here in other situations; this applies to the facilitators as well.
- **The 'I' mode:** We talk about ourselves, our feelings and experiences, our views, etc. We're open and honest in what we say.
- **My Culture** is the unique way in which I have learned to respect values and traditions. I can respect my culture, and I respect the culture of others.
- **Be Selective** about what you say and what you don't say. Not everything is appropriate for sharing with everyone, and it is fine to keep your feelings and thoughts to yourself if you don't feel comfortable sharing them with the group.
- Being **Actively Involved** and taking initiative to be an active part in the group discussion. Give yourself scope to determine what you want to address today, so don't wait passively for someone else to take the initiative.
- **Sexuality** doesn't just mean sleeping with someone. There are major differences between different cultures and people (men and women, young and old) in the way we deal with the concept of sex and what it means. We must create open and comfortable environment to allow participants to engage freely in discussion.
- **Listening** to each other makes for a good discussion.
- **Humour** is important, and it's good sometimes to defuse highly charged subjects. Laughing at other people isn't acceptable though.

Alone
we can do so little
Together
we can do so much
Helen Keller



Chapter 6

Activity Page



6.1 Quizzila

Understanding Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

(Tick True, False or Don't Know for each question):

S. No.	Questions	True	False	Don't know
1	Young people do not need separate SRH services			
2	Dual protection means wearing 2 condoms at a time			
3	Men can also suffer from gender-based violence			
4	Active listening means you know how people will answer a question			
5	Only people on antiretroviral therapy (ART) need HIV care services			
6	If you look and feel healthy, you do not have HIV			
7	Adolescents are more likely to give in to peer pressure which increases their risk for STIs, HIV and unplanned pregnancy			
8	Young people living with disability do not need information on SRHR because they are not sexually active.			
9	You cannot get pregnant the first time you have sex			
10	Girls and boys under 16 are not allowed to access contraceptives			
11	Calling someone names (e.g. telling your partner they are stupid, or useless) is a form of abuse			
12	People with STIs are more likely to contract HIV during unsafe sex			
13	Young people who are sexually abused need to get medical and psychological support			
14	SRHR Champions are also community educators and advocates and can help change policies and practices that affect youth SRHR			



S. No.	Questions	True	False	Don't know
15	It is safe for pregnant women to take anti retroviral drugs (ARVs)			
16	A person has the right to decide whether or not they wish to have children or marry			
17	A person can marry a girl even if she is 17 years of age in India.			
18	Each person must have access to basic health care facility and trained health care providers, to be treated or learn about sexual health			
19	Boys don't need to know about sexual and reproductive health and rights since it doesn't affect them			
20	Proper knowledge of SRHR is the first step to protecting women's rights and liberties and eliminating gender based violence.			

Answer:

True: 03, 07, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20

False: 01, 02, 04, 05, 06, 08, 09, 10, 17, 19





Think Tank

Note Page





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