



QUARTERLY REPORT

July – September 2018

Greetings from the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership!

It gives us immense pleasure to give you a quick peek into what we've been working on these last few months here at the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Abortion and Reproductive Justice Conference (ARJC): The Unfinished Revolution -2018 9th – 12th July, 2018 | Grahamstown, South Africa

Dr. Suchitra Dalvie and Dr. Shilpa Shroff, represented the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership at the conference held in Grahamstown, South Africa. Souvik Pyne, one of ASAP's Youth Champions was also present at the conference, representing the YP Foundation.

As part of the conference, Shilpa attended the 'Youth and Abortion Advocacy' Workshop, on 8th July, 2018, conducted by the Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, Just.CHOICE and the Sexual and Reproductive Justice Coalition (SRJC). The workshop saw an intense discussion about the idea of abortion being stigmatised and considered a "sin", the social taboos that inhibit access to abortion and around the medical process of having an abortion. As a follow up to this discussion, Shilpa was asked to conduct a session on technical updates on safe abortion methods for the participants.

In addition, the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership team presented five papers at the conference:

- *When sex selection and safe abortion are in conflict: universal lessons from the Indian experience: Dr. Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator, ASAP*
The paper addressed the conflation of concerns around abortion and sex-selection at the level of interpretation and implementation of laws. Specifically, it called attention to how this convergence in the discourse has its roots in social, cultural and political processes that precede the policies related to safe abortion. The presentation concluded by arguing that as more stakeholders join campaigns against sex selection, synergy between activists who campaign against gender-biased sex-determination and those who work on abortion rights is essential to ensure gender justice, and safeguard the right to safe abortion from further attack.
- *Reaching out to medical students to create sensitized doctors for the future: Dr. Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator, ASAP*
In the context of the fact that modern systems of medication, teaching environments and curricula, and the medical fraternity is deeply influenced by patriarchy, the speaker called attention to ASAP's work with young people across 20 countries in Asia. Given the nature of medicine as a discipline, the presentation argued that while amending syllabi and textbooks is a longer-term advocacy agenda, working directly with medical students and interested faculty members could help change the nature of teaching and learning with a focus to gender-sensitivity.
- *Creating youth champions through youth advocacy institutes: Dr. Shilpa Shroff, Assistant Coordinator, ASAP*
Given the need for youth leadership in Asia to protect and advance the sexual and reproductive health and rights movement in Asia, especially safe abortion rights, ASAP has demonstrated how successful youth engagement can be leveraged for advocacy, by presenting how it has been working to create a cadre of Youth Champions and mentoring them to lead Country Advocacy Networks. We now have over 230 Youth Champions across 20 countries in Asia, with CANs emerging in 8 countries. These Youth Champions and the CANs are engaged in multi-pronged community advocacy, which includes working with medical students on attitudinal change, enabling discussions with policymakers, publishing articles on the issue, and using social media for shifting the discourse on the issue.

- *History of the policy environment around abortion in India: pre-colonial times to present: Souvik Pyne, Youth Champion, ASAP, representing YP Foundation*

Souvik's presentation focussed on India's Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act. In his talk he touched on questions of how the MTP law came into existence in India, what it includes, and its amendments. He also briefly spoke about the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act (PCPNDT Act) and how the implementation of the MTP Act has been adversely impacted by erroneous conflation with India's anti-sex-determination law, creating public misconception about the legal status of abortion in India.

- *Making safe abortion a public health priority: Souvik Pyne, Youth Champion, ASAP, representing YP Foundation*

In this presentation, Souvik called attention to the fact that India's public health syllabus lacks a mention of safe abortion, although it is a priority concern. The bulk of the presentation was devoted to an intervention he had organised, facilitated by ASAP's Small Grants programme. The intervention was designed as a seminar for medical doctors, academicians and students from medical, public health and nursing disciplines and included sessions that considered abortion from a public health perspective, a technical perspective, and a legal and human rights perspective, as well as a panel discussions followed by a screening of videos on abortion. The value of such targeted interventions in making abortion a public health priority was demonstrated by the fact that Safe Abortion Advocacy was included in the next module of the public health syllabus.

A full report on the event can be accessed [here](#).

Uniting the movements for HIV/AIDS and safe abortion care 21st July, 2018 | Amsterdam, Netherlands



On the side-lines of AIDS 2018, a global partnership of safe abortion, HIV and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) organizations hosted *Our bodies, Our fight: Uniting the movements for HIV/AIDS and safe abortion care*. The Asia Safe Abortion Partnership was one of the core partners of this global alliance. Coordinator represented ASAP at the event, as part of a collaboration with Global Health Strategies. The half-day event brought together more than 200 prominent global advocates and

decision-makers across the HIV and safe abortion spaces to discuss shared strategies and strengthen joint advocacy to address barriers to rights-based health care – with a focus on the champion countries of Brazil, India and South Africa. The objective of the event was to chart a path forward for collective advocacy to promote global policies and programs that uphold dignity and bodily integrity. The event report can be accessed [here](#).

Dr. Dalvie was a member of a panel titled '*Building Bridges to Break Social Barriers to Care*' where she touched on a number of topics including the role of healthcare providers in ensuring just healthcare, the challenge of retaining activists and advocates in fund-constrained workspaces, and the need to include young people in fora beyond a tokenistic engagement of "youth" as a category.'

Strengthening Grassroots Advocacy for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion Services from Public Health Care Systems

July – August, 2018 | Maharashtra, India

SAMYAK with the support of Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) planned workshops on ‘Gender and Access to Safe Abortion’ workshops in five districts from two regions of Maharashtra – Aurangabad, Beed, Satara, Kolhapur, Solapur. These workshops aimed to raise awareness among elected women representatives of *Zilla Parishads and Panchayat Samitis*, about PC-PNDT act and MTP act, and to encourage them to create awareness about access of safe abortion in their constituency and to advocate for access to safe abortion services in public health care facilities in their respective districts and blocks.

The workshops were covered extensively by vernacular media, both print and video. You can read some of the coverage [here](#) and [here](#), and watch some of the videos [here](#) and [here](#).

Let’s Talk SRHR! Youth Engagement For Sexual And Reproductive Health And Rights

12th August, 2018 | New Delhi, India

The workshop was organised as a collaboration between the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership, [Haiyya](#), and [Pravah](#). Building on a conversation initiated at the Multi-Stakeholder Meeting held on the 28th of May by ASAP and Haiyya, the three organisations decided that it would be valuable to host a Youth Adda focussed on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The purpose of the Youth Adda was to sensitise young people to their bodily rights and open up a space for conversation various issues that are of importance to young people.

The objectives of this specific Youth Adda were:

- To create a safe space for young people to talk about issues around sexual and reproductive health, share their concerns and raise questions about issues
- To provide a forum where men and women could discuss this issue with each other in an open and non-judgemental manner.



The workshop was held with 15 young people from various departments across the University of Delhi. Swetha Sridhar, Communications Officer, represented ASAP at the workshop.

Love Matters Pleasure Workshop 29th -30th August, 2018 | New, Delhi India

Love Matters

India conducted a workshop on *Sexual Pleasure: The Forgotten Link in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights*, a two-day workshop for young professionals in Delhi who working on questions of SRHR, gender and sexuality, with a focus to integrating an understanding of pleasure in such work. It was based on the understanding that a focus on pleasure can lead to a broader and more inclusive approach to issues of sexuality and sexual health, thus allowing individuals to take informed decisions about sexual relationships and health, with pleasure being an active factor in these decisions. The trainers introduced the triangle approach to looking at sexual and reproductive health and rights, with the three apices of the triangle pointing to sexual health, sexual rights and sexual wellbeing (pleasure) respectively, while keeping agency at its centre. The endeavour was to make sure that all three factors are taken into consideration when offering an SRHR service and to find ways to integrate the vocabulary of pleasure into these conversations.

Swetha Sridhar, Communications Officer, represented ASAP at the workshop.



Youth Insight: Informing Policies on Health, Gender and Well-being 29th- 30th August, 2018 | New Delhi, India



The YP Foundation held a 2-day national conclave in New Delhi with 170 young people from 17 states to engage with policymakers and other relevant stakeholders on issues of adolescent health, gender and well-being. It brought together youth, government, technical agencies and civil society stakeholders on an equal-footing platform to effectuate a range of focused multi-stakeholder discussions towards affecting youth-informed programming and policy.

Suyash Khubchandani and Sumit Pawar, both ASAP Youth Champions from the India Safe Abortion Youth Advocates (ISAY) represented ASAP at the event.

Youth ki Awaaz Summit: Soft Launch of the #MyBodyMyChoice Campaign 1st – 2nd September, 2018 | New Delhi, India



The Youth Ki Awaaz Summit is an annual forum that brings together thought leaders across India, to discuss critical issues that are shaping social change.

Dr. Suchitra Dalvie represented ASAP on a panel titled #MyBodyMyChoice presented by GHS India, along with Anubha Bhonsle, Insia Dariwala, and Anubha Rastogi. She used the opportunity to call attention to the role of health care providers in combatting stigma, and the need to have open, comfortable and informed conversations about sexual and reproductive health, including in the media and popular culture, especially when it comes to safe abortion.

As part of the Summit this year, in collaboration with Global Health Services India, the Partnership launched the #MyBodyMyChoice campaign. The campaign sought to call attention to the demand for women to have the right to exercise control over their own bodies, with specific reference to the right to safe abortion.

MASUM-ASAP Safe Abortion 7th September | Pune, India

MASUM held a one-day Safe Abortion training for their rural staff members and field investigators. Dr. Shilpa Shroff, Assistant Coordinator, ASAP was present as a resource person for a training on abortion rights at this meeting. The purpose of this training was to improve health workers' understanding and knowledge around safe abortion from a technical and research point of view. A total of 21 people from Purandar and Daund blocks attended the training, and comprised members of MASUM's rural staff including their health team and field investigators.

International Safe Abortion Forum 5th -8th September | Lisbon, Portugal

Dr Phan Bich Thuy, Chair ASAP Steering Committee and Dr Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator ASAP represented the Partnership at this conference.



INDIA SAFE ABORTION YOUTH ADVOCATES

CME Lecture on Safe Abortion 8th August | Mumbai, India

As part of a medical conference, Auxesis 2018, at Grant Medical College & Sir J.J. Group of Hospitals, Mumbai, Dr. Suchitra Dalvie was invited by the Academic and Research Council to deliver a Continued Medical Education (CME) lecture on Safe Abortion.

During the course of the lecture she delineated the differences between human reproductive habits and animal habits, introducing the concepts of pleasure, sexuality and rights. This opened up a discussion on the need for an open and safe conversation on safe abortion, that focussed on women's right to choice. She then conducted a mini-values clarification session for audience members.

6th and 7th Sensitization Workshop 17-18th, 24th -25th August 2018 | Mumbai, India

18 medical and non-medical students from various colleges across Mumbai participated, and were sensitized on issues relating to gender, sexuality, and access to legal and safe abortion services. The sensitisation workshop touched on issues around gender, sexuality, and safe abortion. It brought together critical perspectives on everyday interactions, the media we consume, and the social norms. It also provided technical updates on contraception and safe abortion, and included a papaya workshop to demonstrate manual aspiration.

INDONESIA COUNTRY ADVOCACY NETWORK

Strategic Planning Meeting 27th September, 2018 | Jakarta, Indonesia

The Strategic Planning Meeting was held to work out the Theory Change and organisational details to support establishing a country advocacy network in Indonesia. As part of this, current Youth Champions in the country drafted a Theory of Change for the proposed CAN, and also conducted a SWOT analysis for the organisation. Potential challenges and solutions were also discussed.

Youth Advocacy Institute 28th September – 1st October, 2018 | Jakarta, Indonesia

The YAI was conducted with 7 SRHR activists from across Indonesia.

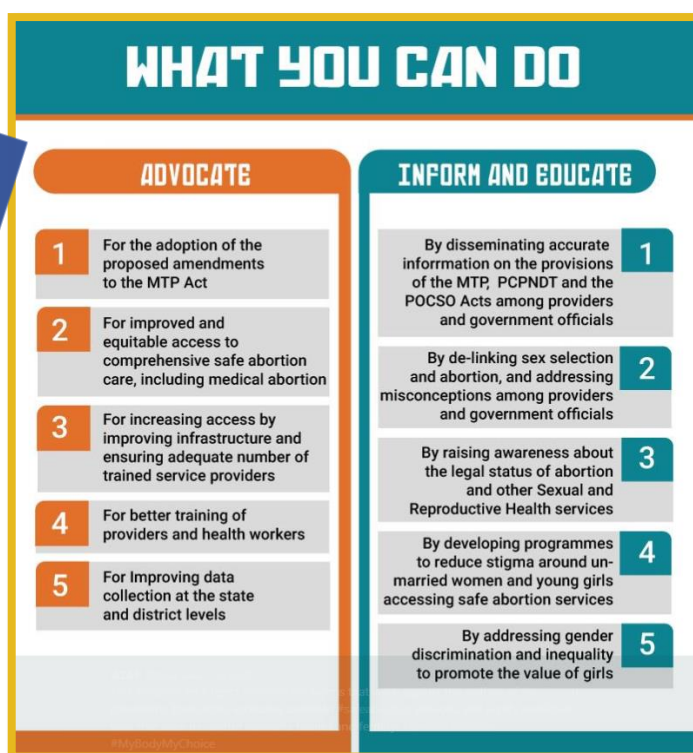
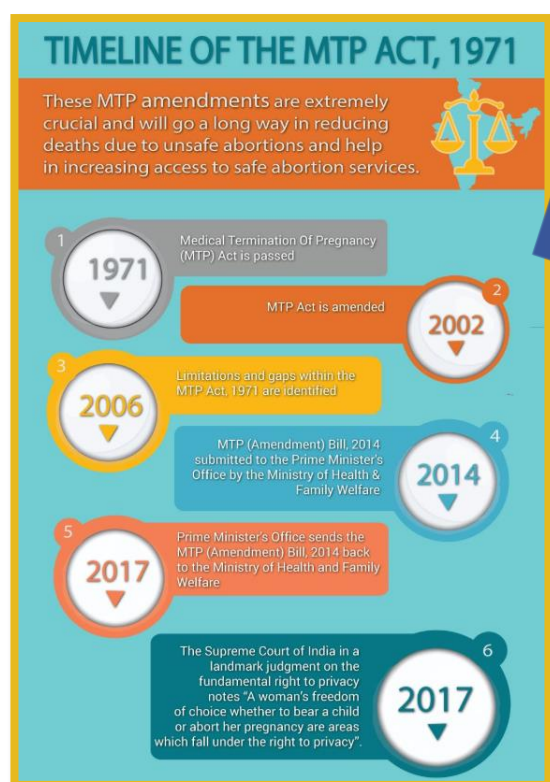
The participants discussed patriarchy, gender and sexuality and how these concepts influence access to safe abortion services. The workshop also provided technical demonstrations of the MVA via the papaya demonstration. Participants developed and designed infographics and visual media to advance the message of safe abortion as a human right.

CAMPAIGNS

As in previous years, this year also ASAP participated in two digital campaigns at the global and regional level.

My Body My Choice

This year we tied up with an alliance of organisations under the banner of #MyBodyMyChoice. The alliance comprised of a number of organisations that work at both the regional and global levels to amplify the demand for the right to safe abortion. The 'My Body, My Choice' campaign sought to break the silence around abortion by bringing key audiences together and promoting conversation around SRHR and safe abortion. The campaign aimed to create awareness among women and young girls – about their abortion rights and how they can realise them – while also cultivating new-age champions for the cause.



"WHEN YOU RESTRICT ABORTIONS, YOU ONLY RESTRICT SAFE ABORTIONS."

Dr Suchitra Dalvie

Coordinator

Asia Safe Abortion Partnership

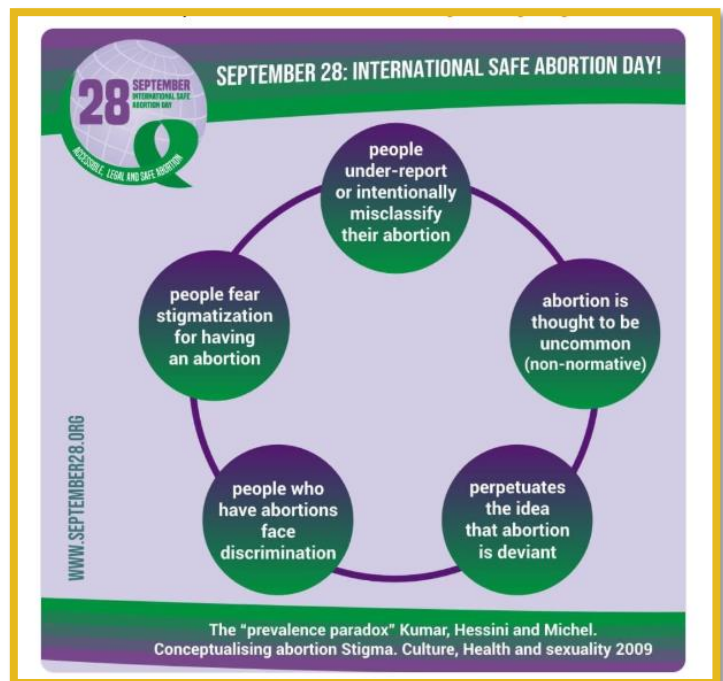
#MyBodyMyChoice



@MYRIGHT_2CHOICE

Normalise Abortion

The global campaign was motivated by the fact that the one thing that all countries have in common regardless of their laws and policies on abortion is abortion stigma. The global campaign seeks to break this cycle of stigma by being frank and vocal about abortion and how safe and legal access to this service will reduce future deaths and health complications, as well as help realizing rights, instilling greater bodily autonomy and empowerment especially to women.



Safe Abortion Wikipedia Edit-a-thon 28th September | New Delhi, India

Feminism in India, and the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership conducted a Safe Abortion Wiki-Editathon as an attempt to rectify the imbalance in pro-choice content available on the internet, but also to address the systemic challenges of who creates and populates information online. All the information researched and added to Wikipedia on the day pertained to the right to safe abortion.



CAN ACTIVITIES

Bhutan

Understanding Safe Abortion, Feminism and all the things that matter 28 September, 2018 | Thimpu, Bhutan

To mark the International Day of Safe Abortion, the Druk Youth Initiative for Sexual Advocacy (Druk-YISA) conducted a talk for the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Studies. 300 students from the Nursing and Health Assistant departments and some lecturers attended. The talk did not address the technical aspects of abortion as a health care service as all the attendees were well versed with the medical aspect of the issue. Rather, it sought to create awareness on the social stance of significance of safe abortion, and the implications that legalizing abortions can have for women's rights and public health.



Vietnam

'Debating Right from Wrong: What are Medical Morals?' A Vietnamese Translation

To mark September 28, the Vietnamese Country Advocacy Network translated a blog article by our Indian Youth Champion, Shreya Mashelkar, titled "Debating Right from Wrong: What are Medical Morals?". The Vietnamese version is accessible [here](#).

