

# **REPORT: YOUTH ADVOCACY INSTITUTE NEPAL**

*Summary of 3 days enriching experience of Youth Advocacy Institute  
in Nepal*

**BY: YOUTH  
CHAMPION  
ADVOCACY  
NETWORK NEPAL  
(YCANN)**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Firstly, team Youth CANN considers it our privilege to express our sincere gratitude to our mentor organization Asia Safe Abortion Partnership for providing us an opportunity to carry out this youth advocacy institute in Nepal.

With a sense of honor and pride we owe our sincere indebtedness to our mentor and facilitator Dr. Suchitra Dalvie, Co-ordinator ASAP for her continuous guidance and supervision, vital encouragement and undue co-operation and believing in us for YAI. We also sincerely thank her for having patience on team despite our flaws and delays.

We express our deepest admiration to Dr. Shilpa Shroff, Vice Co-ordinator of ASAP who couldn't join us in the last moment due to her ill health for providing her constructive criticism, worthy suggestions and much needed motivation throughout this program and guiding team in handling the logistics.

We express our sincere gratitude to Communication officer of ASAP; Ms. Garima Srivastav for keeping the loop of communication during this program and helping us promptly and as needful.

We also express our gratitude to the facilitators Mr. Anand Tamang from CREPHA and Ms. Purna Shrestha from CRR who could not make it to the venue due to fuel crisis but were so encouraging and responsive to the newly formed network. We hope to receive their guidance and support in future as well.

We also thank our participants who were so sincere and interactive during the entire 3 days session. And last but not the least, the team would like to thank all the people and organization who were directly and indirectly involved in making it a success.

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## I. Background

**Y**outh Champions Advocacy Network Nepal was formalized on 17th Jan, 2015 with the mentorship and support of the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) to ensure young people's sexual and reproductive health and rights by promoting access to safe abortion as a right. It also aims to serve as a forum for information, experience sharing and exchange of ideas, strategic thinking and planning for a collective vision aimed towards advocacy of safe abortion services, enhances collaboration and cooperation among organizations and institutions involved in young people's SRHR issues especially issues surrounding safe abortion services. It aims to do so by its working on advocacy and research on SRHR, documentation, networking with organization of similar interest and by promoting leadership and capacity building of its members.

With the support of its mentor organization for the past three years, youth champions have been working in the area creating projects and awareness surrounding safe abortion. They have reached a wide network of audience from media person to the health care providers in making abortion view through gender lens. Our works have been highly acknowledged at the national level through agencies and national daily.

After the formalization of the network, 5<sup>th</sup> youth advocacy institute on safe abortion was the first major event funded by Asia Safe Abortion Partnership which aimed to build an important platform to bring together young women, activists, lawyers, engineer, medical students (doctors and nurses), social worker and men and women of different spheres to discuss on issues surrounding safe and legal abortion in Nepal and Asia. The main objective of this institute was:-

1. To create a community of trained and sensitized youth champions who have an understanding of access to safe abortion as a gender and sexual and reproductive rights, as well as human rights issue.
2. To facilitate the utilization of social media and other community level networking and communication by the youth champions through capacity building and ongoing mentoring.
3. To support the ongoing engagement of the youth champions, within and outside their community to ensure implementation of the above strategies in order to advocate effectively for improved access to safe abortion services, including medical abortion.

The alumni will be facilitated to emerge as members of the newly formed network with a strong voice on discourse surrounding issues of safe abortion at local, national and regional levels.

## **II. PREPARATORY PHASE:**

In order to guide the events and get inputs the old Youth champions who had attended the earlier youth advocacy institute meet ample of times in person and communicated through social media through various preparatory meetings. All together of 10 pre and post meeting was held. The team members were basically responsible for the providing necessary suggestions for the implementation of strategies and activities mentioned before, during 3 days YAI and country seminar. The various meeting helped the team to better understand the event and delegation of activities to each member. Decisions were made by

consensus. When required subgroup meetings were also arranged through Skype or phone. All the members of the group were assigned a role before and during the YAI which suits their interest and area of expertise.

The team was expected to fulfill the following roles:

- Provide the expert opinions in regards to one's experience and working area for effective implementation of the project.
- Attending all scheduled Group meetings for the preparation and the proper implementation of the program.
- Share all required communications and information across all Advisory Group members
- Selecting the participants for Youth Advocacy Institute.
- Make timely decisions and take action to support the program.
- Fostering collaboration within the team member.
- Removing obstacles to the successful delivery of objectives of the project.
- Notifying members of the Group, as soon as possible, if any matter arises that may be deemed to affect the implementation of the program.
- Managing the funds and the logistics of the for YAI and the seminar which includes and in order to do so the members of the team was supposed to carry out following activities:
  - Coordinating with Hotel Manager as and when necessary. Booking hotel rooms, coordinating with the manager on the rooming list, keeping ASAP in the loop.
  - Bookings for Seminar venue.
  - Managing conference menus (such as vegetarian food, water bottles) for all the days of the meeting.
  - Managing the funds sent and keeping a note of disbursement of the per diems

- Buying of stationery: bag/ pad/pens/ folders /name tags. ( YAI + seminar)
- Printing agenda and other resource material, making sets to give to the participants.
- Printing of annual report/ small grants reports.
- Managing the registration desk and being present on the days of the meeting in turns
- Registration list to be printed
- Coordinating and managing the Reception Dinner on Day 1 for participants of YAI Nepal.
- Helping with taking photos during the meeting.
- Informing YAI participants about their selection, venue, agenda, travel etc.
- Invitations for Seminar and sending them information on venue/agenda and travel.
- Managing Menu for seminar
- Prepare financial report for all the cash transfers made other than the hotel.

The participation of the youth champions for the preparation was on voluntary basis, and youth champion who were available in Kathmandu were part of the team. Members were acknowledged for their effort with certain travel cost, daily allowances during YAI and communication allowances. Members were also provided with reasonable time to make decisions as well as complete, accurate and timely information was shared among the team by the team lead.





### **Selection of the participation**

Youth Advocacy Institute to be held in Srilanka, Colombo received an overwhelming number of applications from Nepal. Only, few were selected and had the opportunity to attend the Institute. So, when ASAP decided to conduct the first ever national YAI here in Nepal, the remaining applicants were first given an opportunity to attend the institute. So, majority of the participants were selected from that application process. To add variety to the participation, some were selected by the recommendation from the old youth champions. All together 13 participants were selected for the YAI. Out of which 12 received full scholarship including the cost of lodging and local travel. As, one participant was selected at the very last moment, we were able to provide him only partial scholarship with daily commute to the venue.

The lists of the participants are given here with:

<b>SN</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization Field of experience</b>	<b>Email ID</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
1	Ms. Januka Dangol	BBA graduate	dangol.januka@yahoo.com	+977-9813395941
2	Ms. Aliza Singh	BEYOND BEIJING COMMITTEE	aliza@beyondbeijing.org/ alizasingh6@gmail.com	9841744430 01-4218516
3	Ms. Bijaya Dawadi	Graduate Nurse	Bijayadawadi1@gmail.com	+977 9841827989
4	Ms. Yashoda Dhakal	MIDSON/NURSE	meyashudh@gmail.com	0977-9843286940
5	Ms. Pushpa Joshi	BYIF/SOCIAL WORK	pushpajoshi23@gmail.com	977-9843270035
6	Ms. Shrijana Silpakar	BYIF/SOCIAL WORK	shrijanasilpakar@gmail.com	+977-9849473838
7	Ms. Shumneva Shrestha	IOM/DOCTOR	<a href="mailto:shumnevashrestha@gmail.com">shumnevashrestha@gmail.com</a>	+977-9849159138

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11	Ms. Anjana Silpakar	Nepal Television	EMAIL: anjal_friend_03@yahoo.com	+977-016613164 +977-9841648674
12	Ms. Dina Pradhan	SOLID NEPAL/PUBLIC HEALTH	dinapradhan1@gmail.com, dinapradhan@hotmail.com	+977 9841806380
13	Mr. Randhir Sagar Yadav	IOM/DOCTOR/GRADUATE STUDENT	sagar.randhir@gmail.com	+977 9841014120

### **III. YOUTH ADVOCACY INSTITUTE**

As a result of overwhelming application from Nepal for the ASAP's 4th Safe Abortion Advocacy Institute for Youth Champions, a national level youth advocacy institute began in Nepal from the 29th September 2015. A total of 13 youths from the country participated in the advocacy institute which was scheduled for 3 days.

#### **A. DAY ONE**

##### **First Half**

On a fine Tuesday morning our first national Youth Advocacy Institute started with the new and energetic faces. It was held on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 in Park Village Resort, Buddhanilkhanta, Nepal. It started on 9 am with registration along with the briefing of objectives and agendas by Youth champion Ms. Minal Singh. Before delving into the session everyone gathered in the Hall for "Ice Breaking" introductory session where participants had to introduce themselves with one added adjective in front of their name that define them and the participants following should recall all the name from the beginning, in this way the repetition made it easy to remember names of all the participants.

Pretesting was done with the set of question and 10 minutes time was allocated to complete the questionnaire which was followed by the expectation from the participants. Following were the expectations of the participants which were in line to the objective of the institute.

- To get knowledge about the current situation on safe abortion in Nepal.
- To understand about gender, sex, sexuality, safe abortion in a comprehensive way.
- To gain more ideas about safe abortion as well as SRH.
- Possible methods to promote SRH through different media in different parts of our country.
- To know about ASAP and youth advocacy institute Nepal.
- To know more and updated information on safe abortion, history of safe abortion across south Asia.
- To know about the methodologies of different types of advocacy through social media.
- To gain knowledge and skill on advocacy on safe abortion.
- To discuss the prevailing laws on abortion, its implementation and needful amendments.
- To know about strategies on empowering more youths on advocacy on safe abortion.
- To know about interlink ages of human right and access to safe abortion services.
- To gain detail knowledge regarding safe abortion
- To know the abortion status around the Asia.
- To make new friends.
- To enhance communication skills.
- To know regarding the importance of abortion.
- To know about abortion practices, its major issues raised and challenges faced.
- To know about the different strategies of Advocacy on SRHR that can be implemented in our work as well as person like.
- To know the advocacy skills on issues surrounding the safe abortions.

- To understand clearly about gender and patriarchy, SRHR and evolving issues on SRHR.
- To stand and speak against abortion stigma.
- To create awareness on SRHs using SRHR tools.

Participants were encouraged to set their own ground rule which were punctuality, respecting other views, let one person speak at a time, open mindedness, humor and engaging in discussions were few to mention.





The very first session of Day one which was on “Understanding Gender and Patriarchy and its linkages with safe abortion issues” was supposed to be facilitated by the steering committee member of ASAP and Executive Director of CREPHA Mr. Anand Tamang but due to the fuel crisis, he couldn’t make it to the venue and so the session was taken by Youth champion Ms. Smriti Thapa, Ms. Saru Silpakar and Dr. Suchitra Dalvie, The participants were first asked to divide themselves into 3 groups on the basis of knowledge they have on gender. The groups were divided and rated on scale of (1-10) as Very good (7-10), Good (4-7), Average (1-4). Following which they were asked set of questions by the facilitator and their response was rated. The basic definition of sex being biological identity and gender as social construct created a basic foundation of the entire session. Further the alien role playing by Ms. Minal and Ms. Smriti added more insight as of how society expect men and women to behave differently from the way they move to the way they talk which are defined commonly as gender roles. This

participatory way helped them to better reflect their own current understanding on the differences of sex and gender. Following were responses from the participants when asked about differences between men and women in the society.

Male	Female
Emotionally strong	Functional breast
Commanding voice	Wear skirts and sari
Economically independent	Have long hair
Undeveloped breast	Sexy
Muscular	Soft, shy and Caring
Moustache	Bounded with house
Bold	Reproduction
Penis	Emotional strong
Socially responsible	Menstruation- they have uterus and ovaries and clitoris
Dress up Pants and trousers	Jewelries
Boss/ politician	They wear Make up
Night falls	They don't have nightfall
Usually they are drivers	They are usually housewife

Later these differences were segregated into biological (sex) and socially ascribed roles (gender roles) by the facilitators. The entire session helped the participants to understand gender, sex and power relation. Humor was used in the entire session to make it more simple and understandable. Later on Dr. Dalvie, highlighted upon the gender power relation helping the participants to understand key conceptual issues such as the difference between sex and gender, the social construct of gender and the role of patriarchy in perpetuating the gender inequalities, differential access to and control over resources and decision making powers, system of power. Dr. Dalvie further explained the evolving norms when humans settlement and property inheritance and its result in the need to have and know

biological child (son) from the man. This further propelled the need to control women sexuality and the importance of male child over female child and establishment of harmful traditional practices especially early child marriages. The history of dowry and how it started off as some resources given to the girl when she left her parents' home that she could control and use but slowly got taken over by the patriarchal system and went into the control of the in-laws and has now become one of the root causes for sex selection was also explained by Dr. Dalvie.



Dr. Dalvie on  
gender and  
patriarchy !!

The entire session was rich, intense and participatory. Some interesting discussions of the session were:

- Gender as the expectations of the society.
- Gender should be discussed beyond the binary of sex and should include intersex and transgender.
- Discussion should gear towards on the masculinities and femininity.
- Gender equality does not encompass the number of women or space they occupy but also should encompass the increase in power they hold or share.
- Talking about gender roles is incomplete without talking about the power relation.
- Patriarchy and its arms of patriarchy and how the government, law, police are the controllers outside the home and inside the home.
- Issue of abortion has its roots in patriarchy. Patriarchy in turn is more prevalent like air and water and is overarching structure created by gender power relation. So, abortion cannot be discussed in isolation without understanding the system which hinders the women's access to safe affordable and legal abortion services.

This was further clarified by small activity called power or privilege walk which would assists participants to think about social structures that influence their opportunities and limitations in life, including abortion related experiences. This activity helped youth participants better understand who is privileged based on social and cultural advantages and who is made vulnerable by disadvantages. It also made participants reflect on how a variety of social, cultural, and gender values both limit and enhance our life opportunities and outcomes; how it feels to stand in the shoes of someone whose life



circumstances are very different from their own; recognize that young people are not a homogenous population/group. Later on to give that self-reflection participants were asked to answer following questions:

- How did you feel in the role of the person you were portraying in this activity?
- Where should you have been started if you had been representing yourself in this activity rather than someone else?
- What did you learn from this activity



After the session a short video clip from the film “Water” was shown. Following that, there was a brief discussion which highlighted key issues shown in the movie clip like Gender and power relation, widow and child marriage where how the child as widow is forced to live in self-denial along with the confinement of ashram without having privileges to remarry or even enjoy. Violation of Sexual and reproductive life following the death of husband at age when she barely understood the meaning and role that comes along with marriage.

After the tea break the second session of day started which was on “Human Rights, Sexual and Reproductive Rights”. In the beginning of the session Dr. Dalvie asked the participants to divide themselves into different groups and ask them to prepare a chart with the definition of human rights, sexual rights and reproductive rights. Representatives from all the groups shared their ideas regarding Reproductive and Sexual rights which was interactive and informative.

Some of what they stated is given below:

### **Human rights:**

Participants defined human rights pictorial way as to be Fundamental right guaranteed to both male and female,

*Right to:*

- live without coercion and discrimination
- have information
- educated
- Freedom of liberty
- health including all component of health i.e Physical, mental, social and religious freedom)
- vote
- express feelings

### **Sexual Rights**

*Right to:*

- decide upon one's body
- express owns sexual desires and sexual orientation
- decide owns sexual partner or behavior

- take decisions on the matter of marriage and children
- choose contraceptives
- safe abortion
- expression
- have safe and healthy sex (Sex without Coercion)

### **Reproductive Rights**

*Right to:*

- choose Partner
- when to get married and with whom
- whether to have children and if yes when to have children and the number of children
- abort unwanted child
- access to reproductive health services
- express reproductive concerns

The definitions given by the participants were in line to the definition of human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights. This was further explained by Dr. Dalvie. She not only clarified on difference between human rights and privileges but also helped to unravel other myths regarding human right by highlighting its core value principle. Following which there was a brief presentation on ‘Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights’ by Ms. Smriti Thapa. She gave an overview on how women right movement has led to the foundation of Sexual and reproductive health and rights in the UN spaces and how further these international agreements have impacted the national law in countries like Nepal to make women friendly laws. She also highlighted the connection between human rights and health, linking new concepts of health to the struggle for social justice and respect

for human dignity. It further helped participant to understand the significance of the paradigm shift at the ICPD from demographic goals to individual reproductive rights. The missing link i.e. SRHR in MDG was discussed and now as the world move ahead beyond MDG to SDG post 2015 and the role of youth in coming years to make SDG reality was also discussed. This provided clarity on the rights based perspective toward safe abortion and how right to safe abortion is advocated by tireless effort from the women human right defenders across the world and gets jeopardize most of the time by the people in power and class and further influenced by religious fundamentalist who act as lobbyist in doing so.



**Discussion surrounding sexual and reproductive health and rights !!**



## **Second Half**

The second half of the program began with the value clarification session, during which the participants were asked if they agree or disagree on certain statements, in order to clarify their values relating to those statements. The participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that;

- if abortion means killing a life
- if the husband wants to keep the fetus, does the woman still have a right to abort it
- if a woman with HIV should not have a baby
- if a woman who has had multiple abortion should be encouraged to undergo sterilization

Interesting arguments and discussion were instigated during the session, as Dr. Suchitra Dalvie stimulated the participants to give valid reasons behind their choice to agree or disagree. Dr. Dalvie also encouraged the participants to look at the larger picture while arguing on SRHR, and not just what is being projected to us. She also added how our values are bound by the social norms, culture, and religion and by the manner we are brought up. She explained that we have to be clear about what needs to be analyzed and how we should argue and advocate by developing our own values relating to SRHR.

The value clarification session was followed by a group exercise on values related to sexuality, RH, and abortion in relation to family, peers, school, religion and mass media. The participants were divided into 3 groups, to brainstorm and share the prevalent values and whether they agree or disagree on those values. One of the participants shared about the ritual performed in Hindu religion, where a girl

needs to perform a Panchami puja to clean the sins of menstruation, as menstruation is recognized as a sinful thing by the Hindu religion, which was not agreeable according to the participants. Similarly, another participant shared about the Chhaupadi Culture in Nepal where women and girls are forbidden to touch anything and have to live in a separate dwelling unit, mostly cowsheds during menstrual cycle. The participants also disagreed on the value that prevents informing and educating children regarding sex and sexuality, and added that the family members should elucidate their curiosity, and educate them in a proper way. The positive role of media in prevention of unsafe abortion and other SRHR issues was also highlighted by the participants and they also expressed their disagreement towards the ignorant attitude of some school teachers, when it comes to the topic of sexual education. The participants also disagreed on the way abortion is criminalized and stigmatized, despite of its legalization in Nepal.

After the group exercise, there was screening of a heartbreaking documentary filmed in the very remote Achham district of West Nepal, which showed the dreadful reality of a woman in Achham named Sushila, who had to lose her life due to an unsafe abortion process of inserting a hot rod with a herbal paste into the uterus. After the screening of the documentary, the reaction and views of participants were collected. The participants were saddened by the fact how even a person with knowledge on contraception is also having an unprotected sex and risking the lives of their wife due to an unsafe abortion. The participants also discussed on the need of resources, accessible and affordable health services, infrastructures like road, availability of trained health workers in a remote district like Achham.

The first day of the YAI concluded with the screening of the Hollywood feature film called Dirty Dancing. The participants were asked to put their gender lens on while watching the film, and study how the movie portrays sexuality, gender, as well as the issue of abortion.

## **B. DAY TWO**

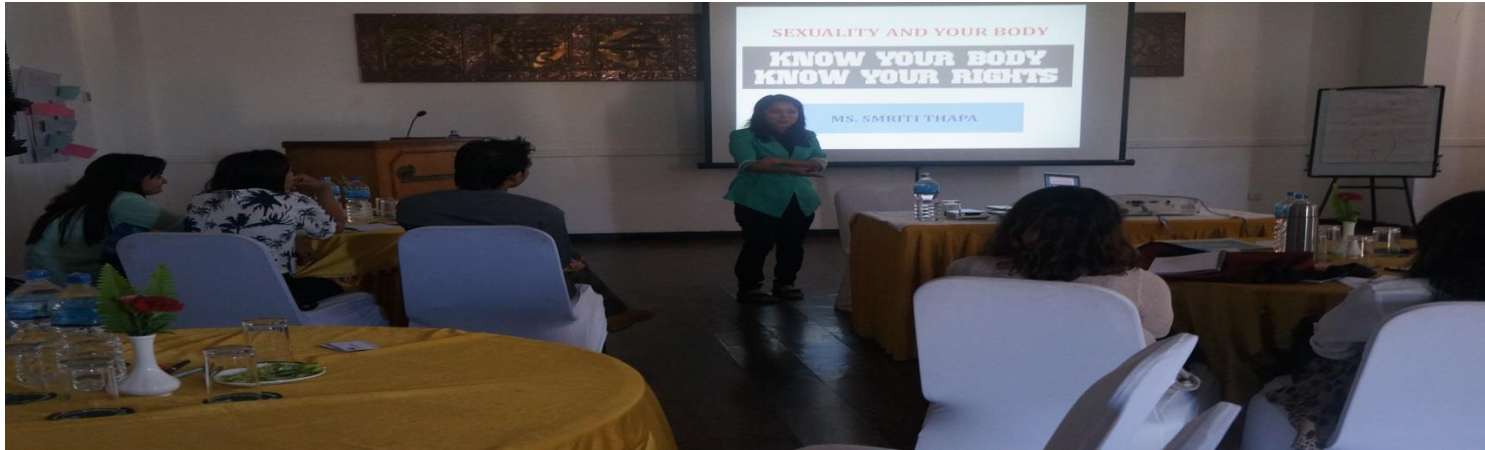
### **First Half**

First half of the second day starts with the quick review and recap of the first day by Youth champion. Dr. Dalvie then started off the session with the discussion of the movie “Dirty Dancing” from the earlier day. First she enquired the participants what were they able to see in that regular mainstream film. Were they able to see beyond Patrick Swayze sizzling on the dance floor? After getting mixed responses from the participants, she then emphasized on how the movie was able to peel off the layers and discussed the depictions of a young woman’s sexuality and the paternalistic controls, class divides, access to safe abortion, attitude of providers and the ways in which transactional sex can take place without being the stereotypical ‘sex work’.

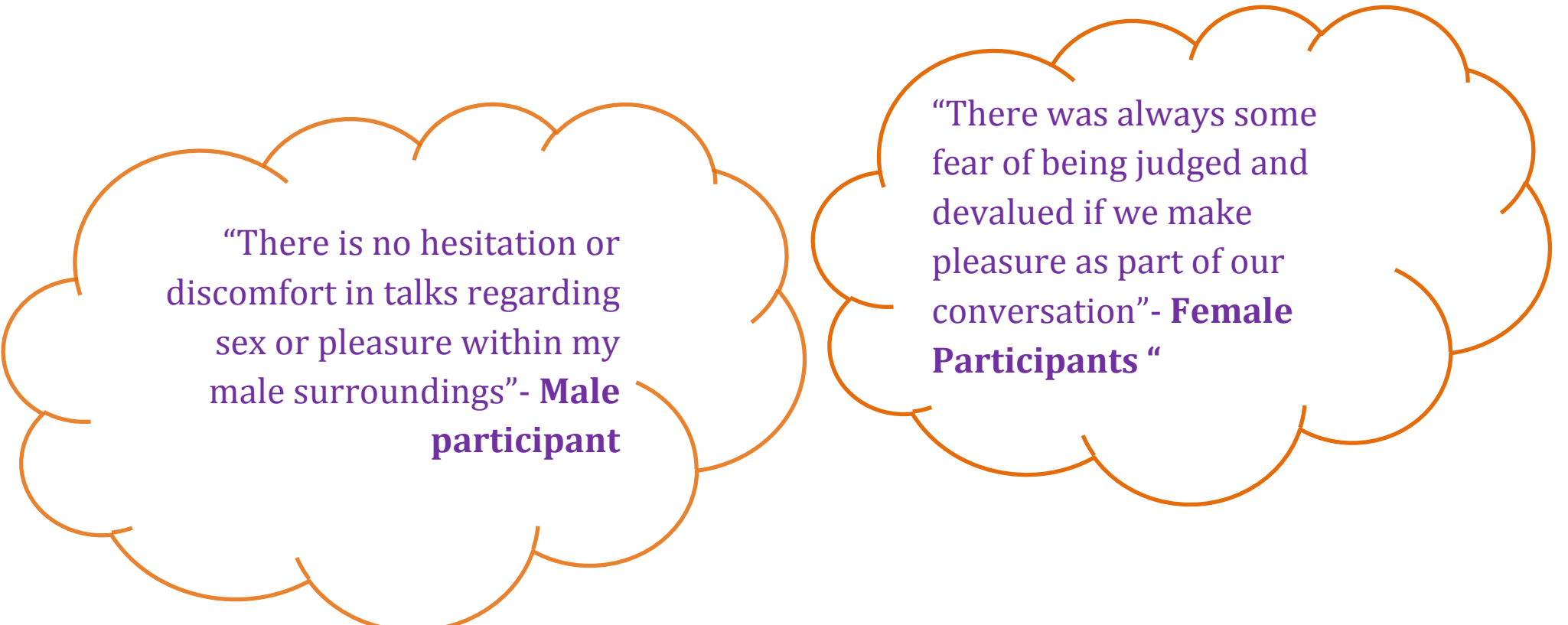


We then entered into the session led by Ms. Smriti Thapa on Sexuality. She started the session with the





basic definition of the sex, sexuality, sexual identity, pleasure and other terms surrounding sexuality. Male and female participant were asked to draw the anatomy of male and female body and locate the pleasure point further asking other participants to agree or disagree or add to the other points. The ambience turned out to be humorous and interesting while discussing on these issues. Participants were then asked as how often they talk about pleasure or sexuality and its values in ones surrounding. Nepal is a patriarchal society. Talking about sex and pleasure is a forbidden taboo. This was the common answer from the female participants. Unfortunately we had just one male participant and he had some opposite feedback. According to him discussion surrounding pleasure and sex was common and easily talked about topic among his male friends.



“There is no hesitation or discomfort in talks regarding sex or pleasure within my male surroundings”- **Male participant**

“There was always some fear of being judged and devalued if we make pleasure as part of our conversation”- **Female Participants** “

The session then discussed common myths surrounding male and female sexuality. Participants were first asked about the myths and those myths were clarified by the facilitator. Dr. Dalvie then drew the conclusion to the discussion making more clear on the understanding of patriarchal social controls on young women's sexuality and made the connections between that and the stigma around abortion. The entire session was a feed for the participants on how talks on the sexual health and sexuality make the talk surrounding safe abortion more comfortable and stigma free.

We then moved forward to another enriching session from Dr. Suchitra Dalvie on contraception and methods of abortion. She was joined by two youth champion: Ms. Puja Karki and Ms. Deepa Pradhan.

The participants were first asked to draw the normal anatomy of male and female in small sticky notes and then later one of the female participant was asked to draw the female anatomy and male participant

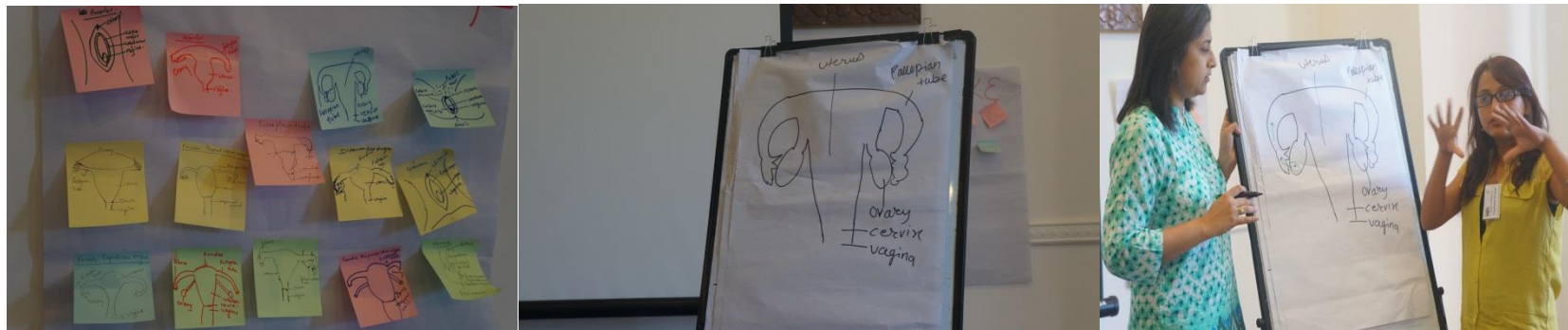
was asked to draw the male anatomy in the larger picture. The participants drew almost the accurate anatomy. Some of the missed points and parts were added by Dr. Dalvie.

Dr. Dalvie further asked participant to volunteer to explain menstrual cycle. Participant Ms. Yasodha Dhakal, nurse by profession explained the menstrual cycle properly to which facilitator added the few points that mostly to mostly missed out but stand out are:

1. The “unsafe period” – or the period during the menstrual cycle when pregnancy is most likely to occur extends from 4 days before the ovulation to 4 days after the ovulation.
2. Ovulation can be predicted by changes in the basal body temperature and by changes in the texture and color of the vaginal discharge. Some women also experience pain in their lower back during ovulation. This is called Mittel Schmerz, or mid-cycle pain.
3. Basal body temperature is recorded before one gets out of bed, at the same time every day. Around ovulation there is a spike in the basal body temperature.
4. The vaginal discharge becomes translucent and stringy during ovulation.
5. It takes about a week for the fertilized egg to be implanted in the uterus.
6. The pregnancy test is positive only after implantation of the egg.
7. The pregnancy test therefore becomes positive only about a week after implantation. So, pregnancy tests may show false-negative results in the first seven days after sex.

To facilitate the discussion further, participants were divided into different groups and asked them to prepare and present on contraceptive devices. Each of the group presented uniquely and the further explanation on each contraceptive device was done by Dr. Dalvie. Moving forward in the session she

explained the various surgical and medical method of abortion and how medical method is getting popular over surgical and as oppose to the common myth if taken correctly medical method are also more than 93% effective for safe abortion. She explained how in countries with restrictive laws, drugs like misoprostol which has also been used and approved as the medicine for gastric ulcer and bleeding is helping women to terminate unwanted pregnancy in a safe way. The various surgical procedures were also explained and the importance of family planning in post abortion care was highlighted too.



## DISCUSSION SURROUNDING UPDATES ON REPRODUCTION, CONTRACEPTION AND ABORTION



The cherry on the cake for the day was fertility dance on the terrace was conducted by Dr. Dalvie, Puja, Deepa and helped by Pushpa! Lots of laughter and fun as the sperms tried to run to the ovum and were held back by the condoms or blocked by the strong arms of the IUDs. The participants were able to better visualize the anatomy and physiology and also the mode of action of each contraceptive device.

After tea break, Ms. Smriti Thapa took the session on Abortion laws with special focus in the national laws and policies surrounding safe abortion services in Nepal. The session was supposed to be taken by Ms. Purna Shrestha from CRR Nepal but due to the national fuel crisis she wasn't able to make it to the venue. Though she was not able to make it to the venue she was so helpful in providing the resource materials and tips for the session over telephone.

The session begun with group activity of real- life scenario where participants were given 5 cases, they were then asked if they are advisors to the President of an imaginary country who has recently indicated to consider some exceptions to the country's laws that ban abortion in all circumstances, even when the woman's life is in danger. The president has asked them to choose three out of the five scenarios (ranked one to three in importance) that they would recommend to be those exceptions. This case scenario provided depicted the various conditions under which women seek abortion. Participants ranked some of the cases and left out few as they felt one group should be preferred over another. They gave the preference on the basis of social structure, class, economy and marital status. Through this activity, participants were made to realize that women seek abortion for various reasons and applying conditions to abortion laws will not address the needs of all the women. People with power to shape policies often tends to be judgmental and have their own rationales and reasons for granting rights to the public especially when it comes to women's right. Abortion should be the right of women and these restrictive laws in various countries undermine the importance of women's right to her bodily autonomy. This session gave participants an understanding of the implications of law and its impact on

services. It also helped participants to understand the barriers created by laws and practices of safe abortion services and gave an overview of positive amendments to country laws which would facilitate access such as in Nepal and what restrictive laws can do citing the examples of countries in Asia where abortion laws are very restrictive. The participants were taken to the journey of safe abortion services in Nepal for past 13 years, its challenges and issues surrounding it. As preparing future advocates, it was imperative to give them detail understanding of existing laws and policies that will help them to be better advocates in future.

After lunch we moved to ideological debates with a session on what it means to be pro-choice, and discovering how far we would go to support women's autonomy, and their rights to make decision for their own bodies, even if this meant that we might have to face uncomfortable questions from the opposition.

Dr. Dalvie gave an overview on the issue of sex selection citing the example of India and PCNDT act which has jeopardized the abortion services in the past few years in India. She also emphasized the growing concern of sex selection might land of in such new laws and policies that might jeopardize the country national abortion law. She further asked participants to see sex selection through gender lens and right based approach. Just talking about sex ratio will not solve the problem of gender inequality and the preference of male child over female especially in countries like Nepal and India where the preferences are the result of hegemony and patriarchy that has its root embedded in the culture and religion. The participants found the session very interesting and posed various questions making the entire session very interactive.

We ended the day with more fun and laughter as we watched Hysteria, a movie based on the invention of the vibrator , the most popular sex toy ever, but which also gives us a window into the lives of women in the 19th century and the struggles to be given any dignity, respect and of course equality.

### **C. DAY THREE**

#### **First half:**

First half of the final and third day of our Youth Advocacy Institute with the wonderful, enthusiastic, motivated youth champions began with the quick recap and review by the youth champion. The session propelled forward on interpersonal communication by Ms. Prabina Sukaju. The main objective of the session was to ensure that our new Youth Champions will exploit every chance to practice their communication skills so that when circumstances emerge they will have the style, the sharpness, the clarity and the emotions to affect other people. She started with 'Role Play' to begin the session along with one of the enthusiastic volunteer, projecting ways to overcome communication barriers in communication process. Following it was a short interactive and powerful session on effective communication was then conducted. Sequentially participants were then made to play two intriguing and fun games i.e. 'Chinese whisper' and 'Katti ta' which mirrored that whatever word we utter ought to be chosen with utmost care for people will hear them and be influenced by them for good or ill. Finally, the session was wrapped with brief discussion on what they perceived and how they felt about the session and was linked to the advocacy of SRHR. Participants raised the queries on appropriate age for communicating on such issues. To which Ms.Smriti Thapa and Dr. Dalvie clarified the concept of evolving capacity vs. age appropriate for the communication of SRHR and the techniques on how people of different age can be delivered the intended message according to the level of understanding with the help of effective communication and following the basic of communication





After the really enriching and interesting session by Ms. Prabina Sujaku, Ms. Dalvie took another session on how to create and curate content; how content plays a vital role in communication and why content matters? Participants posed various questions regarding the content and majority of them posed their fear in regards to creating content. Following which Dr. Dalvie answered their fears and queries surrounding social media. She further explained how the collection and sharing of content



such as articles, videos, pictures, songs or movies involves the collection of content relevant to a topic which should be kept in angle, and then sharing short portions of them (on a blog or Facebook, Tweet), is the first few initial and integral steps in social media advocacy.

Some quick tips on creating and curating content were also given which includes being:

- Critical.
- Finding own angle.
- Remembering to attribute.
- Being picky
- Posting snippets of content.



Later everyone was given a small time frame of 20 minutes to create a small content on safe abortion services and then they were asked to present the content post lunch time.

The session moved forward on the use of social media like Face book and twitter. This was taken by youth champion Ms. Smriti Thapa. She shared some quick basics of Facebook and twitter. Participants were quiet familiar with the use of Facebook. However, majority of them had no idea on the use of Twitter. Participants were not only guided to open a new account but also how to post meaningful content in twitter and Facebook. They were also guided on building an audience to connect and create networking to be the part of the advocacy in social media. They were also enlightened with the social media jargons like #hashtags, trending, follow, handle, buffer and others and how they can be meaningfully used to create a wider connection. Furthermore, the common myths of social media were unraveled and some tips on handling anti-choice group were also given.

Participants were informed that infographics (graphical representation of the data by images) were the most easy to understand and effective content to publish in social media.

### **Second Half**

Post lunch everyone settled down for some quiet time to share the prepared original content based on the learning, reflections and analysis of these past few days on safe abortion services. Some amazing outputs were shared ranging from cartoons, to a re- thinking of all holy books, personal stories and a call for social justice and demands for women's rights.

The Youth CANN team then shared stories of their own personal journeys from new participants to being peer trainers and now leaders of a new network. The experience sharing act was a moment of inspiration for the new youth champions.

For most of the participants the Institute was a process of deep personal impact since many of them had already begun questioning the status quo and the hegemonic models they faced but did not have the language or the politics or the arguments to challenge it. They are now feeling empowered and validated and motivated to learn even more and continue the good work.

The session ended with the valedictory session where the participants were accredited with the status of the youth champions of Asia Safe Abortion Partnership and members of newly formed Youth Champion Advocacy Network Nepal (Youth CANN).

We also expressed our love and gratitude to Dr. Suchitra and Dr. Shilpa for their immense support, patience and inspiration for the team Youth CANN with small token of love.

The three days wonderful journey came to an end after a group photo with a hope to connect, unite in the future as strong team for stronger voice in the advocacy of safe abortion.



## **OUTCOMES:**

1. The YAI created a platform for young women and men from different background to learn advocacy for young people's sexual and reproductive rights at national and international level within the human rights framework with special focus on safe abortion.
2. With new champions from the institute, formation of strong network of youths working on diverse movement (Human Rights, Law, media, engineering, Youth, Research etc.) to work on sexual and reproductive rights with focus on safe abortion services.
3. With the session on social media, participants learned to utilize social media for networking and communication.
4. Participants had an increased understanding on SRHR and enhanced leadership following the institute as measured by the pre-test post –test evaluation.
5. Youth champions will be supported for their ongoing engagement within and outside their community to ensure they advocate effectively for improved access to safe abortion services, including medical abortion. It will be done either through mentor ASAP small grants or other through their engagement in other future projects of the network.

## **CHALLENGES**

1. One of the major challenges was the current political situation and fuel crisis in Nation, due to which we couldn't have the presence of some facilitators for the session as planned. Meanwhile, daily commute for the old YC to the venue was also troublesome.
2. Country seminar which was scheduled on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2015 was also postponed based on the recommendation given by the invitees due to fuel crisis.
3. Getting support for young people's SRHR through mainstream human rights movement is important to integrate our issues into human rights advocacy and to receive that support from the

other human right defenders in the country for their presence in the seminar and in future is also a challenge for newly formed youth network like youth CANN.

### **LESSONS LEARNT:**

1. Involvement of young people from diverse movements/background helped to understand different perspectives and angles to the issues of SRHR faced by young people--which the institute did by involving mix of fresh and experienced advocates/activists. This created sharing of experiences and has helped to build strong SRHR advocates in different arenas by enhancing their knowledge and advocacy skills.
2. There was sustained and enhanced cohesion between the members of the network during the preparation of the YAI and country seminar.
3. There was transformation in knowledge, skills and attitude among the youth champions in working as team, managing logistics and carrying out an important 3 days institute with team effort.

### **CONCLUSION**

Youth Advocacy institute Nepal coordinated by the Youth Champion Advocacy Network Nepal (Youth CANN) and funded by Asia Safe Abortion Partnership was the stepping stone for the newly formalized network Youth CANN. It has provided an excellent learning sphere for the old Youth Champions. New youth champions became the part of newly formed network. They are now a solid foundation of the network which strives to serve as a forum for information, experience sharing and exchange of ideas, strategic thinking and planning for a collective vision aimed towards advocacy of safe abortion services.