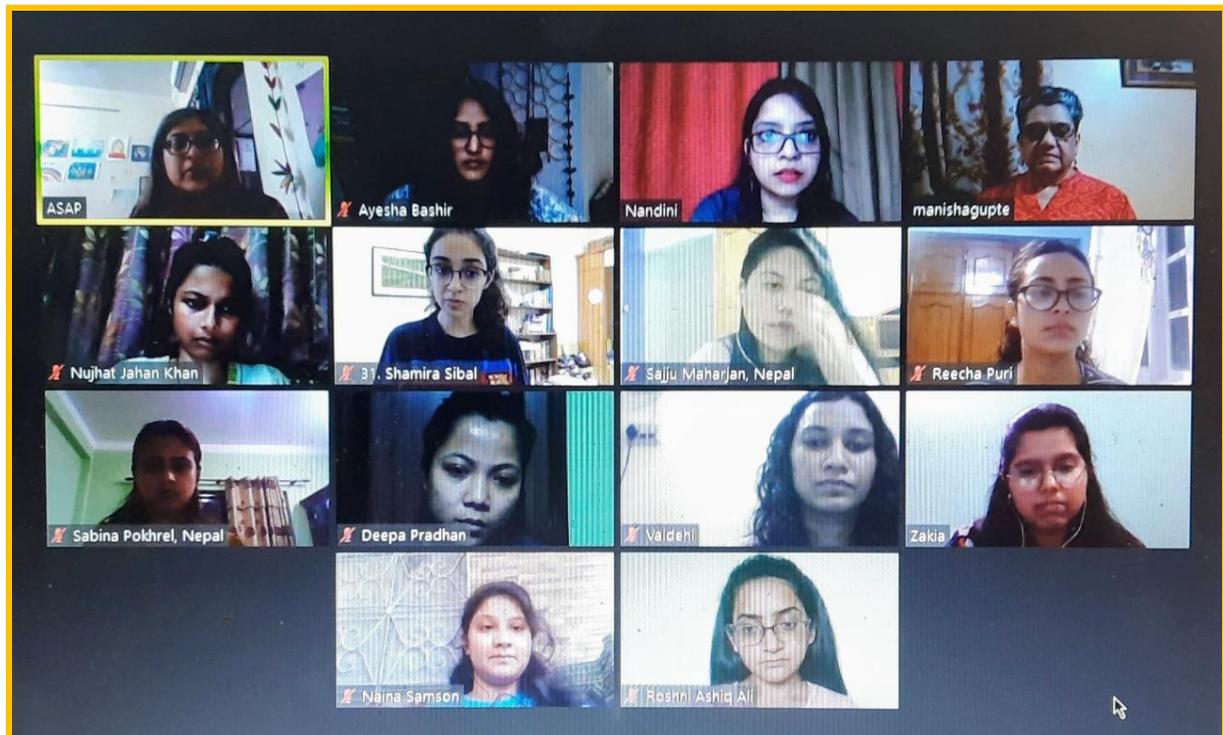




The 1st Online Regional Youth Advocacy Institute (Dhaka) 29th July to 22nd August, 2020

A Report



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Introduction:

The 1st Online Regional Youth Advocacy Institute (YAI) was organized by Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) from 29th July-22nd August 2020.

The Institute was going to be organized in Dhaka, Bangladesh, but due to the Covid 19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns and travel restrictions it was not possible to hold it in person and had to be converted into online sessions. The agenda was revised and made more concise to manage the original 3-days long program into 2-hour long weekend sessions every Saturday and Sunday in July and August. This meant some sessions could not be covered but the core conceptual framing and group learning sessions were conducted as usual.

It is proposed that when the situation with the global pandemic is over then a physical meeting will be organized for a refresher and to cover the sessions that need in-person participation.

The objectives of the Institute:

1. To create a community of trained and sensitized youth champions who have an understanding of access to health care as a gender, 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 health care services, including medical abortion.

Week 1

Day 1

Introduction

Dr. Suchitra Dalvie, Coordinator, ASAP, welcomed everyone and started the round of introductions where everyone had to choose an animal identity for themselves. This was a fun way to start the weekend sessions that slowly delved into deeper conversations towards build an understanding of safe abortion rights from a gender perspective.

Agreements

The agreements for ensuring the best learning space for the online Institute were discussed:

- Use Google classrooms for accessing resource materials and assignments, Zoom for the classes and WhatsApp group for announcements and discussions
- Keep the phone on silent (or avoid distractions)
- Use Zoom breakout rooms for group activities
- Meet up mid-week if required

- Be on time
- Complete assignments on time
- Participate actively
- Be respectful
- Be non-judgemental
- Treat this as a safe space
- Chatham House rules (can share what was said but not who said it)

About Bangladesh

We wanted to avoid hosting the meeting in anonymous cyberspace and hence decided to locate it in Bangladesh as per original plan anyway! The participants from Bangladesh helped give us a virtual tour by sharing some highlights of their country and culture and food and singing a beautiful Bengali song!

Gender, sexuality and patriarchy

Dr. Manisha Gupte facilitated the opening session on gender, power and patriarchy. She helped the participants to understand the biological concept of male and female (the chromosomes) and about the diversities that exist beyond the binary. The different diversities exist because nature intended it that way but it never planned the discrimination against the diversities. The discrimination is socially created and perpetuated. She gave the example of intersex people as one such diversity in nature. Therefore, the way society treats the biological sex and assigns it gender roles given is determined by patriarchy. The gender roles also help patriarchy perpetuate itself – *“women are not born, women are made.”*

She also helped unpack the way gender is defined by society and becomes a learned behaviour by giving examples of a boy and a girl and how they are raised differently... *‘Munna gets to go out and negotiate with the outer world. While, Munni learns to handle the domestic sphere and stay at home.’* Though girls are confined to the home to ‘protect’ them from danger and violence, we know that 70% of violence and abuse occurs at home.

Society also determines what it means to be masculine and feminine and define how men and women should be or behave. Masculinity is associated with physical strength, while submissiveness, politeness and calmness etc. are considered to be feminine traits. Therefore, according to society women may think about their looks and about romance, while men may think about sex. (Women cannot express sexual desires openly if they want to be considered ‘good’, while as men they are expected to be sexual and express their desires openly.)

Dr. Gupte also spoke about those who do not fit into the binary and those who challenge heteronormativity (or the norms associated with being heterosexual and cis gendered people). Society often brands them as abnormal, perceive their difference as a personal failure and something that threatens the social and religious fabric, and therefore stigmatizes such identities and expressions. She urged us to contemplate what does ‘normal’ mean given that normal is not static and it keeps changing over time and space. She explained that normal is those who conform to society’s norms or rules and anyone who strays from the norms or breaks the rules is ‘abnormal’.

Gender is a construct created by patriarchy, the caste-system in Asian and Asian diasporic communities, religion and capitalism which all interact and strengthen one another by defining gender in narrow ways (and confining it to binaries and heteronormativity.)

Dr. Gupte referred to [Sylvia Walby's Six Structures of Patriarchy](#) or structures that control women and perpetuate patriarchy:

- Paid work
- Household Production
- Culture
- Sexuality
- Violence
- State

Dr. Gupte then went on to talk about Public and Private Patriarchies and included videos, such as, [It's my fault](#) featuring Kalki Koechlin.

The participants were asked to watch the film Dirty Dancing (1987) to reflect on these ideas.

Day 2

Recap

Participants shared their thoughts from the last session and gave us an insight into their thoughts:

- One participant shared how the session made them rethink language and the linguistics meaning behind words rooted in patriarchy.
- Another participant shared that the session made them question what does 'normal' mean?
- Another participant was forced to wonder what makes one a woman and how patriarchy is perpetuated through families.
- One participant point out how sexuality and desires and how differently they are expressed in men and women due to social norms. For example, Casanova by default means a man and is there a female equivalent of the same word?
- One participant asked if transitioning from women to male imply one is converting into a more privileged position?
- One asked about the role of caste in gender, sexuality and patriarchy.

Gender and mass media



Ayesha Bashir, Communications and Networking Officer at Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP) facilitated the session on gender stereotypes in mass media. Ayesha shared how these stereotypes in advertisement revolved around:

- Personality - macho and active men and delicate and passive women
- Occupation - men engaged in outdoor and risky activities, in high powered and high paid jobs, and women in roles like teacher, dancer, house-wife etc.
- Domestic behaviour - men not engaged at all and women responsible for all domestic chores
- Physical appearance - physically strong men and pretty women

However, these stereotypes are not limited to gender but also limit/box the definition of how a person should be as per their caste, community, ethnicity, religion, nationality etc. They are also reproduced by general public through social media content and memes. The nature of these may seem funny but combined with misogyny and sexism, they perpetuate patriarchal notions, contribute to gender based violence and can cause harm.

The session was well received and raised many questions, including, the intricate balance between female sexuality and expressions of desires versus objectification and catering to the male gaze.

Understanding power and patriarchy

Dr. Manisha Gupte facilitated the session on patriarchy and how the origin of patriarchy is rooted in the development of agriculture and agrarian societies, when humans left their nomadic lifestyles. As they agriculture developed humans felt the need to protect their own land and pass it down to their own seed. Women's bodies became the vessel in which the seed would be planted and brought to life and therefore, the need to control those bodies. It is during this stage of human society when patriarchy became more deeply engrained in our cultures.

Patriarchy is a hierarchical system in which men are placed above women. It is interesting that by and large women accepted and even perpetuated their own subjugation for centuries. Dr. Gupte mentions Antonio Gramsci's idea of 'cultural hegemony' where there is force (in the political structures) but also consent is produced (in the civil society) to perpetuate the status quo. Dr. Gupte therefore reminded the need to challenge multiple patriarchies.

She also discussed how the indigenous communities that still engaged in older nomadic lifestyles, subsistence livelihoods and cooperative activities for the community, saw lesser patriarchal manifestations in their culture. The women in these communities enjoyed greater freedom and even the right to express their sexuality. While, in so called developed civilizations women's bodies are tightly controlled and even used to represent the nation/nationalism, community pride, family honour and even the goddess that is worshipped. In this elevated position women lose their humanity and end up facing greater punishment for any sign of human weaknesses. This is how Brahminical patriarchy gained strength in the sub-continent and women's stereotypes evolved as the benevolent mother figure or the *devi* (goddess) or the dirty whore. She referred to Bhupendra Bakshi's work on structural violence and the need for counter hegemony to challenge patriarchy in all its various manifestations.

The participants were asked to find out their mother's mother's mother's maiden name as home work!

They were also given a few readings and videos (George Carlin's video and Love Sex and Dhoka or LSD).

Week 2

Day 3

Recap

Participants shared their thoughts from the previous week:

- Unlearning is difficult.
- The importance of building solidarity.
- The session made them think about hegemony and patriarchy.
- We talk about women's empowerment but it is still a distant dream for many.
- The session also brought out issues of capitalism and marketing.
- The need to understand Brahminical patriarchy and urbanization.
- The need to understand the nuances or the layers of patriarchy in media and in our general culture and how do we negotiate with them.
- The need to understand protectionism and paternalistic care as another form of patriarchal control.
- The idea that marriage is the best day of our lives is often sold to us – if indeed that was the case and marriage as an institution was equal and liberating for women then it would not need selling.
- There was also discussion around the assignment movie Dirty Dancing and finding the mother's mother's mother's surname. One participant from Bangladesh shared that women in her family do not change their names but most participants agreed that it helped them discover the hidden history of the mother's side of the family.

Understanding power and patriarchy (continued)

Aspects of patriarchy include: patrilocality or changing homes after marriage and changing names after marriage. There also exists a strong son-wanted-ness and daughter-unwanted-ness in our cultures. Birth of daughter in a patriarchal household or community, such as, the Rajputs who consider themselves to be the warrior communities, is seen as a loss of honour. Patriarchy also insists on a strong control over women's bodies therefore, daughters and daughters-in-law both must be virgins. Love marriage is considered a loss of face in patriarchal communities and honour is located in women's bodies. It is interesting to note that women themselves don't have any honour but they merely embody the honour of their community.

Rape was discussed, especially as used against women during conflict or as a war crime. In the subcontinent, memories of partition of India and Pakistan is particularly important as it is during this time when women were captured as an attack against the community. After partition there were efforts to bring those women back from the men who had captured them and return the women (an exchange). If the women were accepted by their original families, they were not allowed to bring any children with them as their children were seen as the 'enemies' seed. *A reading was suggested: Untold Stories of Partition by Urvashi Butalia, and a novel called Pinjar by Amrita Pritam which was later made into a film.* Rape was also used widely during the Bangladesh Liberation War.

The greater the persons hierarchy in the patriarchal system or their standpoint, the more authority they have over others. Savarnas or upper caste, cis and heterosexual people in the sub-continent enjoy greater resources and continue to exploit those lower in the hierarchy. Those at the lower rungs of the hierarchy, such as, Dalits, minorities, tribal and indigenous people, queer people, face greater exploitation and have limited or no resources. Elaborating

a bit more on Brahminical patriarchy she said it emphasizes rituals, perpetuates the caste-system, and tightly controls sexuality.

However, Dr. Gupte also reminded us of the constant negotiations we make and how the dismantling of patriarchy needs to be done in multiple ways.

She talked about the social structures as the Panopticon (or the theory of Prisons as discussed by Michael Foucault) and that they lead to self-censorship. She also discussed the concept of Habitus by Pierre Bourdieu or how society shapes us and keeps prompting us how to behave and react. Gender dynamics too are shaped by the environment and are dependent on the current affairs of the society. Therefore, gender dynamics change for the better when the overall environment is good and prosperous and changes for the worse when the overall environment is bad and chaotic.

Dr. Gupte mentioned the concept of intersectionality which was first coined by Kimberly Crenshaw and then expanded on by Patricia Hill Collins based on her ideas of lived realities. She made us reflect on the dichotomy that sex as desire is a taboo but sex as control is accepted although sex as work is not allowed. She cautioned us about campaigns against obscenity and objectification because such moralistic attacks are rooted in the patriarchal need to control sexuality by protesting. Therefore, if as feminists we find ourselves in the same protest with the right wing we must pause and reflect/question.

She also reminded us of the two types of patriarchies: private and public and how they act together. This was given as an exercise in the breakout rooms and participants were divided into small teams where they could discuss. They had to then share back how private and public patriarchies play out and here are some points:

Sl. No.	Private Patriarchy	Public Patriarchy
1.	The male partner or a man has the authority and he has to sign the consent form for an abortion.	Provider bias and when women are refused an abortion if they can't bring their male partners or a man along.
2.	Most women want to decide when they want to have a child.	Most women don't control these decisions and have little or no agency over their own bodies
3.	Job distribution (domestic chores vs. working outside the home, paid vs. unpaid work, care work etc.) and making big decisions.	Women's bodies are objectified and they are stereotyped (as the care givers, responsible for domestic and unpaid chores mostly) and women's voices are mostly unheard in families. Their sexual health and rights are ignored.
4.	Religion and culture is both private that influence an individual's belief and also public that influences laws and policies.	Religion and culture, such as, the heartbeat law of Alabama that then dictate the private lives of those who live there and may need an abortion.
5.	International policies impact individual lives, regulate their sexualities before and after marriage and affect young people's access to abortions.	Global Gag Rule under the current United States of America's President Donald Trump has adversely affected those in need of safe abortion (information and services) across the world. The most vulnerable (such as those living in poverty and young people) are the most affected.

Dr. Gupte shared about the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) as an important milestone towards gender equality. Especially Article 1 of CEDAW that defines discrimination as: “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.” The approaches to achieve gender equality could be diverse, such as, equivalence or formal and protective approach through setting roles and safe spaces for men and women. Or the equity approach or affirmative action which is a social justice framework to ensure equity of opportunity, access and results. The equivalence approach does not take us towards equality but the social justice or equity framework takes us towards equality.

Day 4

Recap

- One of the participants shared that they were compelled to think about surveillance and the jalebi story (nuances and negotiations)
- Participants also enjoyed the break out rooms.
- One of the participants thought about why rape was considered the most heinous of all physical and sexual assaults.
- One participant expressed that as feminists we are committed to equality and not to replace patriarchy with matriarchy.
- Another participant expressed that they found the approaches to equality very interesting.

Human rights and SRHR

The session started with some videos and a PPT was shown to the participants. Participants were asked: what are human rights? One of the participants answered human rights are natural rights that begin from ourselves and are meant to be extended to others. Dr. Gupte explained that human rights is the theory that there are certain rights that apply to us simply because we are born humans. All humans are born free and equal but how is this linked with abortions? People who may need an abortion are born free and equal and they may choose to seek an abortion if needed.

However, human rights have to be incorporated into the law of the country. Human rights include, autonomy, personhood and dignity. Dr. Gupte explained the difference between rights versus needs –

SI. No.	Needs	Rights
1	Needs can change	Rights are stronger and more powerful
2	Needs have to be justified	Rights have an obligation to be fulfilled
3	Needs are subjective	Rights are more objective

Human rights-based approach versus rights-based approach:

Rights based approach is limited and dependant on the state.

Human rights might be more liberating but it is limited as there are many people who are not even considered humans.

During the discussions around Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) it was acknowledged that currently the focus is mostly on reproductive rights and there was a need to shift the focus on sexual rights.

Week 3

Day 5

Recap

- One of the participants shared that rights and needs are often decided based on what is important. However, women are ignored and the community's ideas are dominant.
- One shared that their perception of rape changed. Now they understand rape as a tool to control and symbolizes society's honour.
- One participant shared that rape is not just a crime of one person against another. There are many people who get raped but their rape is not even recognized, such as, when trans people, men, etc.
- In many cultures and countries around the world rapists are often asked to marry the person they raped as a "punishment" putting many at risk of living with their abusers.
- Rape of a sex worker or a trans person is less or not important versus someone who is perceived to be from a more "honourable" background.
- Understanding that rape is often used as a tool of conflict or war.
- The need to stop discriminating between daughters and daughters in law (Dr. Gupte's term for her daughter-in-law: daughter-in-love)
- Women's chores (domestic labour, care work that are unpaid but are extremely important for society) and their contribution to the economy.
- Understanding the diversity of gender identities and sexualities.
- One participant reflected on the problems of mostly men in decision making positions and making laws, such as, the law in Georgia that restrict abortions to 6 weeks, language and how it is rooted in patriarchy, letting go off rapists/harassers by making the women they abused tie a rakhi (ritualistic wrist-band)
- Dr. Gupte reinforced that rights are obligatory and duty-bearers have to ensure us our rights.
- Patriarchy in mythology (Ram and Sita's story)

Values clarification

Dr. Gupte and Dr. Dalvie facilitated the session and asked what are values? Participants replied:

- value is something that is considered important
- they are standards or norms
- they influence our behaviour and morals
- they influence what is considered right and wrong or good and bad in our society

Dr. Gupte clarified that values are passed on in families, they guide our understanding of what is acceptable in society and what is not, and often decided by community leaders (patriarchs). Values are influenced by religion and passed on by peers and mass-media. However, there is a need to question values as values and laws (they often interact) can be unjust and must be challenged.

A set of questions were discussed and there were discussions around each of them, for e.g., a woman has an abusive/violent partner and she leaves him. Is that correct or not? Participants argued she was correct because violence goes on in a cycle. However, Dr. Dalvie and Dr. Gupte countered that by presenting a patriarchal point of view prevalent in our society that if all women who face violence walk out then it will be detrimental for our families.

Similarly, though sex work is a choice but values around it may affect the perception of a sex worker. Even if a serial killer murder a sex worker it may not evoke the kind of response among people. This also reflects in the laws around sex work and in many countries, it remains either criminalized, such as, in Bangladesh, or in the grey zones where it is neither legal nor criminalized, such as, in India and Nepal.

Day 6

Recap

Participants shared about the value clarification and how it challenged some of their beliefs:

- Most situations are not black and white and we tend to give instant reactions instead of reflecting, such as, how we react negatively against sex work and sex workers.
- Participants also reflected on sex work, sex selective abortion and if sex selective abortion is a method of family planning.
- They reflected on abortion and the ethical position around it – if abortion is killing a life.
- Participants agreed that blind obedience to anything, including, customs and traditions is wrong.
- Participants also reflected the way biases exist against people and how it may affect their lives, such as, when someone who is HIV+ is pregnant and wants to have a baby.

Abortion laws and policies

Dr. Dalvie led a discussion on abortion laws and policies. An exercise was carried out where participants were divided into break-out groups and they had to decide who they would allow to have the last abortion and why. This brought about a lot of nuanced discussion around who are perceived as “deserving” of abortions, who can do without it and be subjected to an unwanted pregnancy. This also gave participants a glimpse of how policy makers decide on issues, such as, abortions within a limited context and how best to negotiate with them.

The existing abortion laws and policies from the countries where the participants were from – Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan were also discussed. The justice and incarceration system were also discussed, especially, in the context of Nepal. In Nepal there were cases of women being imprisoned for having an abortion but in 2002 when a progressive law was passed which decriminalised abortions in the country.

Week 4

Day 7

Contraception and gender

Dr. Suchitra Dalvie facilitated the session by asking the participants to draw the male and female reproductive systems. She led a discussion on the reproductive system, menstruation, ovulation and pregnancy, including, how pregnancy tests work. The history of pregnancy tests and their evolution was discussed – how the chemical found in the pregnant person's urine was tested in frogs in the beginning and how they have gradually evolved to an extremely accurate, inexpensive tests (still based on urine) that are easily available in chemist shops around the world. The symptoms and signs of pregnancy was also discussed – nausea, breast tenderness etc. The sexual behaviour of animals was also discussed – animals usually have a mating cycles and few animals, such as, the great ape's mate or have sex throughout the year. Very few animals, such as, dolphins, elephants, the higher apes and humans have sex for other reasons and not only for procreation – for pleasure and power; very few animals also masturbate, such as, dogs.

The various contraceptive methods and how they work were discussed – oral contraceptive pills, condoms, copper-T, injectables and patches, and so on. Injectables may have side effects such as amenorrhea and the break in oral contraceptive pills is not needed but more to fulfil the cultural expectation to bleed every month. Copper in the Copper-T is a spermicide and condoms have spermicide as well. Patches use hormones to prevent pregnancies. Dr. Dalvie asked participants to find out the proportion of vasectomy (permanent yet reversible family planning method for men) to tubectomy (permanent family planning method for women) in their respective countries. Dr. Dalvie mentioned that the history of contraception and family planning methods is a history of feminist struggle and women were arrested even for sharing information.

Unsafe and safe abortion

Methods for safe abortions were discussed, manual vacuum aspiration or MVA and the medical abortion or MA pills – Mifepristone and Misoprostol. The reason why unsafe abortion existed even after technological advancement is mainly due to patriarchal norms that restricts access to safe abortion services and endangers lives. Therefore, Dr. Dalvie reminded that it is important to understand abortion in the larger context - is not a standalone and does not exist in a vacuum. It exists in the context of patriarchal social norms and laws and the movement for the right to safe abortion is a part of a larger feminist struggle against such unjust norms. One of the medical abortion drugs, Misoprostol that was available to treat gastric ulcers in Brazil was discovered to be effective for terminating pregnancies by Brazilian women, given that safe abortion was highly restricted by the law.

Day 8

Recap

- Participants acknowledged that their misconceptions around oral contraceptive pills and emergency pills were dispelled in the previous session.

- However, when it comes to hormonal contraceptives one has to keep in mind that Estrogen may have more side effects and therefore should be used under supervision of a doctor. Progesterone is relatively safer to take for a longer time.
- Participants shared back the colloquial names for menstruation indicating the shame associated with it. The names were – mashik in Bengali (meaning, monthly), untouchable, that time of the month, shark week, lady time etc. People would also say that they are having cramps to avoid saying the word.
- Participants also discussed words and phrases for male and female masturbation – while there were quite a few for male masturbation, there seem to be no names for female masturbation implying the taboo around female sexuality and sexual pleasure.
- The readings were also discussed – the role of women in Nazi Germany and how bodies are controlled in the name of nationalism; the role of NGOs and a critique through the Gates Foundation case study; the way crime and punishment are defined in countries, such as, Saudi Arabia; the position of Dalit women and how their rights are violated through the Bhanwari Devi case study; and so on.

Subversion and hegemony

Dr. Suchitra Dalvie led the session on subversion and hegemony. Hegemony or domination of the ones who are powerful over the rest of the people – for example, United States of America exerts hegemony over global politics or in south Asian communities those who are from dominant and upper castes exercise power over everyone else. Subversion is a strategy to counter hegemony. We need to find something that people already know and then twist it to convey our message which is counter hegemonic. The subversion stories often use popular folklore or legends but turn them around and portray an alternate reality. They are popular as they connect with audiences due to the familiarity and yet leave them astounded with an unexpected ending.

What does it mean to be pro-choice?

Based on the ideas and examples of subversive feminist messages, Dr. Suchitra Dalvie discussed the need to put out as many pro-choice messages out there so that these messages are easily available for everyone. She also asked to rethink the language to advocate for safe abortion rights - we often say “abortion is illegal except for...”, which focusses on the ‘illegality’ of abortion and reinforce the stigma around it. As activists and abortion rights champions we should instead say, “abortion is legal in the case of...” and normalize the idea of abortion being legal.

Week 5

Day 9

CAN sharing

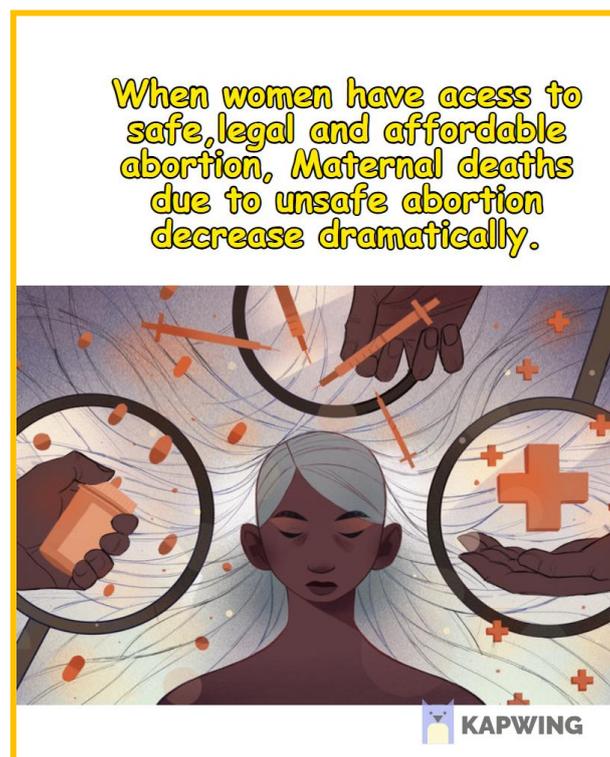
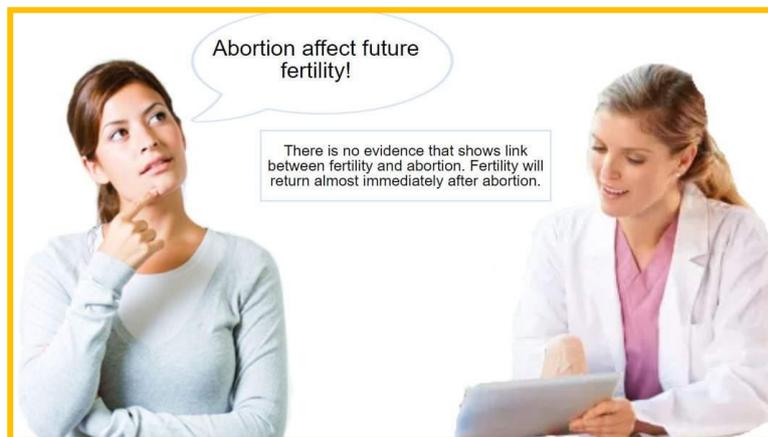
The CAN members from ISAY, YouthAID, YoSHAN, and PAN joined the session to share about their work, including learnings and challenges. Many of the CAN members work voluntarily and are balancing their responsibilities along with studies or jobs. This makes it difficult for them to continue and be actively engaged throughout. Therefore, in most cases the CANs are led by a few while other members get involved as and when possible. . However, different CANs are in different stages of evolution and some have been able to establish a stronger and more stable structure.

This year as the COVID19 pandemic broke out and the entire world grappled with it, it was very challenging for everyone including the CANs. Yet the CANs have tried to step up and adapt to these challenges. For example, YoSHAN carried out a number of online activities and also helped out women access SRHR and abortion services during the pandemic. ISAY conducted 11 sensitization workshops for medical students including medical students from Bangalore and continued the work on abortion curriculum. PAN was able to conduct a few offline activities and all of them worked with ASAP during the lockdown to raise awareness online.

Content creation

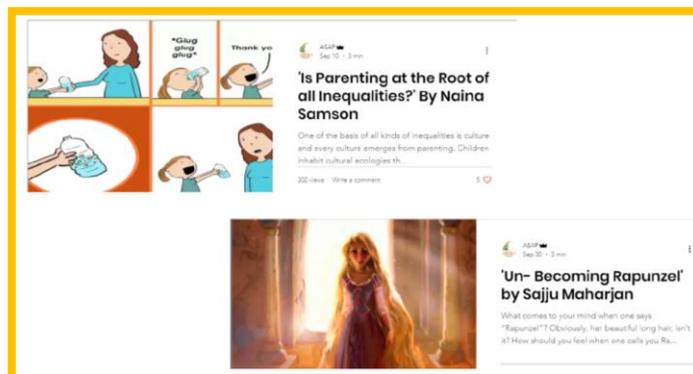
Finally, based on the inputs received through the sessions the participants created feminist content with subversive messages that took on popular culture, including, fairy-tale, films, songs etc. They created memes, wrote blogs, etc. to share their thoughts and below are some examples of their work:

Memes:





Blogs:



1. [Un- Becoming Rapunzel' by Sajju Maharjan](#)
2. [Is Parenting at the Root of all Inequalities?' By Naina Samson](#)

Next steps and evaluation and feedback forms

The institute was concluded and we conducted the post evaluation and collected feedback from the participants. The feedback was by and large very positive and reiterated the importance of and need for such online learning spaces even in the midst of a global pandemic. However, most participants expressed the desire to also meet in person once the pandemic is over.

Overall, as a team we felt the online space had its own advantages and we could engage with the participants over a long period of time. Yet we agreed with the participants that the physical interaction is very important and we hope to follow-up with an offline gathering for a refresher whenever it is possible to travel safely again.

Annexure 1 – Agenda

1st Online Regional Youth Advocacy Institute (Revised)
Asia Safe Abortion Partnership
July-August 2020

Objectives of the Institute

1. To create a community of trained and sensitized youth champions who have an understanding of access to health care as a gender, 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 health care services, including medical abortion.

The alumni will be facilitated to emerge as a community with a strong voice on this discourse at local, national and regional levels and to engage with the issues on an ongoing basis through the online network as well as through participation in relevant meetings.

Agenda			
Week 1			
Day	Topics/Sessions	Learning objectives	Methodology
Day 1: Saturday 18th July - 7 to 9 pm IST	Introduction	Introductions, Host country Bangladesh	Dr. Suchitra Dalvie and Participants from Bangladesh
	Agreements	Agreements of engagement	Dr. Suchitra Dalvie
	Gender, sexuality, patriarchy	• Understand the difference between sex and gender, the social construct of gender and the role of patriarchy in perpetuating the gender inequalities.	Manisha Gupte
Day 2: Sunday 19th July - 7 to 9 pm IST	Review and recap		Participants
	Gender and Mass Media	Gender, sexism and mass media	Ayesha Bashir
	Understanding power and patriarchy	• Understand the cascade effects this has on the differential control over resources and decision-making powers especially with reference to healthcare systems	Manisha Gupte
Week 2			
Day 3 Saturday	Review and		Participants

25th July - 7 to 9 pm IST	recap		
	Understanding power and patriarchy		Manisha Gupte
Day 4 Sunday 26th July - 7 to 9 pm IST	Review and recap		Participants
	Human Rights and SRHR:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the definition of sexual and reproductive rights and the linkages with other rights in upholding them. • Understand the significance of the paradigm shift at the ICPD, from demographic goals to individual reproductive rights. • Obtain clarity on the rights-based perspective towards safe abortion. 	Manisha Gupte
Week 3			
Day 5 Saturday 8th August - 7 to 9 pm IST	Review and recap		Participants
	Values clarifications		Manisha Gupte and Suchitra Dalvie
Day 6 Sunday 9th August -7 to 9 pm IST	Review and recap		Participants
	Abortion laws and policies		Dr. Suchitra Dalvie
Week 4			
Day 7 Saturday 15th August 7-9 pm IST	Review and recap		Participants
	Contraception and gender in health		Dr. Suchitra Dalvie
	Unsafe abortion and safe abortion		Dr. Suchitra Dalvie
Day 8 Sunday 16th Aug 7-9 pm IST	Subversion and hegemony		Dr. Suchitra Dalvie
	What does it mean to be pro-choice?		Dr. Suchitra Dalvie
Week 5			
Day 9 Saturday 22nd Aug 7-9 pm	Review and recap		Participants
	CAN sharing		ISAY, PAN, YouthAID, YoSHAN
	Sharing of content creation		Participants

	Post evaluation and feedback forms Next steps		ASAP
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