

Dear Colleagues,

Greetings..!!

Women constitute half of the world's population and deserve equal opportunities to live and thrive as anyone else. We all have right to life whoever we are, wherever we are. We have the right to make choices and decisions about our own bodies. Unfortunately, not many of us are as privileged enough. We get dictated by our families, societies, and governments. Sexual and Reproductive Rights means that one should be able to make one's own decisions about one's own body and—

- Get accurate information about them.
- Get access to sexual and reproductive health services.
- Choose if, when and to whom to marry and decide if and when and how many children we want to have.

This also means that we should be free from all kinds of sexual violence including rape, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced sterilization, and forced female genital mutilation.

The recent overturning of the Roe vs Wade case landmark decision, nearly 50 years after, has created seismic political and societal shifts not only in the USA but also the world over. It has kickstarted not only questioning the sexual and reproductive rights of women, but also forcing them to significant medical risk and unacceptable mortality arising from this denial to access abortion in undesirable pregnancies.

We are very fortunate in this region to be able to provide care and access to most of our women but unfortunately there are still many gaps leading to a lot of unmet needs, care provision and safety in the areas of contraception, abortion, protecting women against sexual violence and empowering them to take their own decisions about their health and own bodies. In spite of very strict POCSO Act, we have not been able to curb various kinds of sexual violence against women.

We are privileged care providers with good interaction and reach. Apart from the maternal and newborn child healthcare services, we need to invest some time to educate and empower both young boys and girls about fertility awareness and mutual respect for each other. This is the next step forward for achieving our goals as far as sexual and reproductive health is concerned. Governments also need to work urgently on the same. Societies all over the world like FIGO, WHO, AMNESTY International, AlignMNH & PMNCH are all emphasizing on the same. FIGO has recently come out with the Cartagena Declaration focusing on the sexual and reproductive rights of women all over the world. We are moving at a very fast pace in the world but how can we move fast and forward if half of our population is left behind.



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