

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

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“Where We Begin”: Reimagining Humanity Through SRHR

The Quiet Revolution Begins Within

There is a revolution not marked by fire or fury, but by something far more powerful. The ability to say, “This is my body. This is my life. I am the one who gets to decide.” That revolution is Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), and it begins with the most sacred truth we own. That our bodies are not battlegrounds, but homes.

SRHR is where freedom begins. It is not a luxury or a privilege such that it gets to be afforded to some and denied to others. It is a human right, and when it is denied, controlled, or swept under the rug, people suffer. Mostly women, girls, and marginalized communities. Before education, before opportunity, before equality, there must be safety. There must be choice; the freedom to say yes or no. A woman cannot reach her potential if her body is controlled by others. A young person cannot thrive if silence surrounds their questions. A society cannot prosper if it denies people the right to love, to heal, to plan, to protect.

Yet in far too many places, SRHR is *whispered* in corners. Silenced by stigma. Eclipsed by shame. Girls married before their first period, menarche. Women dying in childbirth without help. Survivors of sexual assault with no one to turn to. People living with HIV afraid to seek medical attention. Transgender people scared to live openly, facing constant fear and discrimination. People forced to live in hiding because of who they are or who they love. These are not statistics, they are lives, and every life matters!

It is about time we get to challenge the societal structures that are there regarding this whole idea and have these *uncomfortable* discussions! *Why am I even referring to them as ‘uncomfortable’? Probably because of, AGAIN, the societal structure. That most of us have been raised up to believe that this is not a topic worth being discussed. That it is a personal issue, one that we are meant to silently take to the grave.*

These topics range from consent and grey areas, asexuality, menstruation and sexual health, sexual trauma, kink and BDSM, sexual addiction, reproductive coercion, to use of birth control, body shaming, sexual health in transgender and non-binary individuals, and pornography addiction. The list is quite endless.

It is up to us to accept that mistakes have been done, probably by us and those who have been there before us. This mistake is ignorance. By acknowledging this, we get to learn and unlearn from our missteps and make amendments. It is only after this that we can be able to start on a clean slate. I would love to call it *‘reconciliation.’*

These are not isolated failures. They are reflections of systems built to ignore the most vulnerable. And until we honour SRHR, we will continue to fail each other and ourselves. We will continue muddling through problems, solutions of which we have in our hands, but are scared to take reasonable steps to overcome them.

The Echo of Silenced Stories

Imagine a 14-year-old girl forced to become a mother. A nurse out of reach in a rural village. A trans person turned away from a clinic. The stories are countless; and each one is a universe of pain.

Behind every denial of SRHR is a fractured life. A dream deferred. A voice that fades into silence.

But there is hope in the voices rising. In the bold midwives who cross rivers to reach mothers. In the educators who teach consent and self-worth. In the survivors who speak so that others may be spared.

SRHR is not only about health, but also about justice. It is not only about the absence of disease; it is about the presence of dignity. When we invest in SRHR, we reduce maternal mortality, prevent HIV, eliminate gender-based violence, and empower entire generations to live fuller and freer lives.

The question is not whether we can afford to prioritize SRHR. The question is how can we afford not to? And if we decide to take a step and work towards it, what approaches do we take to ensure that it is effective?

The Promise We Owe Each Other

A world where SRHR is universal is a world that values every life equally. It is a world where policies are written with compassion. Where clinics are sanctuaries, not sources of judgment. Where children learn not just about anatomy, but about empathy, respect, dignity, and consent.

This is the promise we owe one another: That no one should suffer for being who they are. That no one should have to plead for basic care. That every person, regardless of gender, sexuality, age, or status should have the right to control their future.

Let us be the generation that listens. That leads with love. That fights not just with laws, but with the conviction that *every person matters*.

SRHR is not a debate. It is a declaration: that our humanity is non-negotiable. That the power to choose, to love, to heal, and to live fully belongs to *everyone*.

May we rise, not in anger alone, but in unity. May we never forget that the health of one is bound to the dignity of all. And may we hold, in our hands and our hearts, the truth that SRHR is not where the story ends, it is where all of us begin.

The lack of SRHR is not just a health crisis. It is a crisis of justice. A society that fails to protect the most intimate rights of its people is a society that fails, at its very core, to be humane. This is an agenda that requires to be pushed, because every life matters, every voice counts, and every choice deserves respect!