



Developing awareness package on self-care- Abortion, post abortion care and Contraception

World Health Organization (WHO) has provided a framework of self care interventions for health. Based on these a need assessment and a feasibility study was conducted by Foundation for Survival for Women and Children (SWACH) to understand the awareness of the women regarding Medical Termination of Pregnancy. The target audiences were women in pre-conception and peri-conception period and it was concluded that there were gaps in the knowledge of the women regarding abortion laws, risks and complications of pregnancy, restoring health after undergoing abortion and prevention and control of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Keeping in mind that a lot of scope exists for Self care interventions in managing abortions, post abortion complications and contraception, SWACH planned another study with the following goal and objectives:

Goal: To develop and check the feasibility of implementation of an awareness package on self-care relating to abortion, post abortion complications and contraception.

Objectives:

- To develop a package for awareness generation in the community regarding self care in relation to abortion, post abortion complications and contraception by frontline health workers based on guidelines of WHO.
- To check the feasibility of the implementation of the package in raising awareness in the community about self care in managing abortion, post abortion complications and contraception.

The study was conducted over a period of five months (May to Sept 2022). The implementation part of the study was conducted in the rural areas of the state of Haryana in north India.

Development of the awareness package: The process of development of the awareness package began with the brainstorming exercise to define the key areas to be included in it. During the brainstorming exercise, learning of SWACH from its previous studies which included a Need Assessment study was reviewed. After the review four key areas were finalized- Safe abortion, Post abortion care, Contraception and Prevention of STI-HIV. Self care interventions and awareness messages to promote good health and prevention of the complications related to the key areas were then enlisted based on the Guidelines of WHO on Self Care for promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health and other guidelines related to safe abortion, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases. The awareness package which consisted of an Illustrated Guide and audio-visuals was developed.

Feasibility of the awareness package: To check the feasibility of implementation of the awareness package- the illustrated guide and the audio-visuals, awareness courses were organized within the community. The local language (Hindi) versions of both the illustrated guide and audio-visuals were created



to use as tools for conducting the courses. Each course consisted of four sessions, one each on Safe abortion, post-abortion complications, contraception and prevention of STI-HIV. Only one session was conducted per day. The participants were literate females of the age group 25-40 from the study area. Courses were conducted in two settings - onsite and online. The **results** were as follows:

- Awareness package was developed in the form of an illustrated guide and four audiovisuals for the use of frontline health workers. Both cover interventions and awareness messages for self care to be adopted by community to maintain good health and prevent complications related to abortion, post-abortion care, contraception and sexually transmitted infections.
- A total of 41 awareness courses, 36 on-site and 5 on-line, were organized successfully in the study area. Participants were literate females of the age group 25-40.
- The overall percentage gain in the knowledge level of the participants (community females) related to the issues of safe abortion, post abortion care, contraception and sexually transmitted diseases after attending the full course was 32.0% in case of onsite courses and 61.5% in case of online courses.
- The overall percentage gain in the knowledge level of the frontline health workers related to the subjects taught in the training was 30.4%.
- Findings of the focus groups revealed a change in the attitude of community towards practices and beliefs related to abortion.

The following were **concluded** from the study:

An illustrated guide supported by audio-visual presentations on abortion, post abortion complications, contraception and STI-HIV has been prepared and field tested with frontline health workers. • The package was implemented in onsite and online settings in rural and semi-urban community. • There was a significant improvement in knowledge of women 20-35 years of age in each of the four domains. These improvements were significant in frontline health workers also. • Experience with training of frontline health workers shows a need for improvement in cascade model training. • The experience with online capacity building provides optimism for their application amongst communities and frontline health worker where smart phone possession is high and internet connectivity is good. • Experience with focus group discussion has provided insights in the improvement in attitude and removal of myths and misconceptions in the areas of abortion, post abortion care, contraception and STI-HIV. • Experience of the study shows promising findings in opening the potential for the application of mobile technology as a complimentary strategy to sustain information on self care related to abortion and its complications.