

Report of Activities
 April 2019-March 2020
 Sama Resource Group for Women and Health

This report provides an overview of the activities and initiatives undertaken by Sama during the period April 2019 to March 2020 across different organizational focus areas. Some of the areas include Gender based violence, public health, sexual and reproductive health including abortion and infertility. The last one year has been very significant in terms of enabling the organisation to strengthen areas of work and ways of functioning. This period saw the consolidation of previous work and involvement in new and important areas of research. Sama's capacity building activities reached out to diverse groups and constituencies – community based organizations, networks, health care providers, frontline workers, policy makers, students, young researchers improved understanding on a range of issues and themes with regard to health, gender based violence, assisted reproductive technologies, Surrogacy etc. The young team from Sama had many opportunities to attend various meetings, conferences and present their work.

1. Training & Workshops in Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Bihar

Title	With whom	Place	Brief Description
Workshop on Gender, Rights and Consent	Girls from Ranchi (Jharkhand), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) and Muzaffarpur (Bihar)	Delhi	The key objective is to deepen the understanding of sexual and reproductive health and rights along with the sharing of experiences with each other. Interactive methods like films, role plays used which helped the participants to understand many facets of their reproductive health and rights, as well as question prevailing notions and practices in their communities.
Workshop on Role of Frontline Workers and provision of SRHR services	ANMs	Mandar, Ranchi, Jharkhand	Objective: To understand the barriers that the ANMs face while executing their duties. It provided a space to discuss issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights and inculcate a better understanding of these issues among the ANMs.
	ASHA and Anganwadi workers	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh	Objective is to facilitate a space where health workers can talk about barriers faced due to the health system as well as for being women. Various issues like burden of work imposed on them by the system; non-recognition as formal workers, lack of remuneration, indignities

			experienced because of patriarchy and caste etc. were raised by health workers during this workshop.
Meetings / Workshops with Civil Society Organizations for building a collective on sexual and reproductive health care	Community Based Organizations (CBOs) working in Ranchi, Jharkhand and Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh	Ranchi, Jharkhand	Objective is to explore and build collective initiative for addressing issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender based violence and early marriage. The discussions highlighted the lack of access to comprehensive reproductive health care, lack of information regarding safe abortion services, nutrition, and experiences of the marginalized women while accessing health care services in the state to be among the most pressing lacunae, demanding immediate intervention.
Workshop on Access to Comprehensive Abortion Services: with a focus on Laws, Perspectives and Advocacy	Community Based Organizations	Ranchi, Jharkhand	Various cases were discussed by the participants themselves, bringing forth the experiences of women and girls from marginalized sections and identities such as unmarried girls, single women, widows, sex workers and those belonging to the Muslim, Dalit or Adivasi communities.
Workshop on Exploring the Social Determinants of Health with specific reference to young Girls and Women	Participants from 26 CSOs in 9 districts of Uttar Pradesh	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh	The workshop primarily deliberated on the interrelationship between socio-economic and political factors and health policies, and accessibility to health care especially for the women and girls belonging to the marginalized sections of the society. The discussions highlighted the inherent linkages between structural inequalities, inequities caused by global economic structures and access.
Health Mela - "SWASTHYA MELA"	More than 1000 women and girls from 45 villages across state Jharkhand engaged with Sama over 2 years	Mandar block of Ranchi, Jharkhand	Innovative activities such as event on writing songs, slogans and plays focusing on SRHR issues like stigma on infertility, bodily autonomy etc.; IEC displayed stalls where they assisted in explaining their perspective and information about SRHR to the participants were organized and managed by women participants. This Mela not only increased

			confidence to women for arranging this kind of big event but also brought together various organizations from Jharkhand with whom Sama has been working with over several years.
Consultative meeting on issues faced by ANMs while providing the SRHR services	ANMs	Mandar, Ranchi, Jharkhand	Objective is to understand the barriers that the ANMs face while executing their duties. It provided a space to discuss issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights and inculcate a better understanding of these issues among the ANMs.
District level training for health care providers in Odisha on Gender Based Violence (GBV)	Over 60 Medical Officials, health providers and representatives of police, and the child welfare committee, the Superintendent of Police of Gajapati, the Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) and the Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee.	Gajapati district, Odisha	The training was organized by the District Health Department and a local organization- Indian Society for Rural Development (ISRD), which had been involved with some of Sama's initiatives in the state. The training discussed the amendments in laws related to sexual violence, updated provisions on the role of health system in ensuring care and services, and the state level SOP/protocols to be implemented by service providers including the hospitals.
Training with medical officers (MOs) on MOHFW guidelines and protocols on medico legal care for survivors of sexual violence in Jharkhand	40 Medical Officers and other health officials from nearly all the 24 districts	Ranchi, Jharkhand	The training was organized by the Department of Health and Family Welfare and National Health Mission Directorate in Ranchi. The focus of training was to orient participants on understanding of GBV in the context of gender and intersectional inequalities and their relationship with health, the roles and responsibilities, preparedness of the public health system in providing therapeutic care including psychosocial care, medico legal care were the main topics that were discussed, drawing on the gaps and challenges experienced by MOs in their provisioning
Training for One Stop Centre (OSC) team, MKCG	Ten-member OSC team including district counsellors,	Ganjam, Odisha	The training dwelt on the provisions and implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for

Medical College and Hospital, Behrampur	case workers, multipurpose workers, legal counsellors, etc.		coordinated response to address GBV in Odisha. The OSC team considered the training as important by the as they received detailed inputs and clarifications regarding various dimensions of the SOPs, the linkages and procedures within health facilities, the legal mandates towards responding to survivors, etc., which are often difficult to access.
Workshop with organizations towards strengthening health system response to GBV in Odisha	Organizations across 16 districts- representatives coordinating the OSCs, state wide disability rights, transgender rights networks.	Bhubaneswar, Odisha	Sama had organized this workshop in collaboration with state chapter of the Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA). This workshop followed several previous initiatives that reinforced the health system's accountability to survivors, legal and policy mandates, ground realities, gaps and challenges.
Workshop with organizations towards strengthening health system response to GBV in Jharkhand	32 participants from around 20 CBOs working in 9 districts of Jharkhand	Ranchi, Jharkhand	The workshop emerged as a felt need of the local organizations following Sama's initiatives on SRHR in the state. The workshop covered a wide spectrum of issues relating to the health system response to GBV. It also provided the space to collectively plan efforts for the implementation of the MoHFW guidelines and protocols for medico-legal care for survivors that were initiated in 2014, but were yet to be implemented in the state.
Workshop with organizations towards strengthening health system response to GBV in Uttarakhand	Team members of Project Burans linked with the Emmanuel Hospital Association (EHA)	Bhubaneswar, Odisha	The workshop attempted to build a foundational understanding of the inter-relationship of gender and intersectional inequalities, violence and health; relevant laws, protocols, etc. The Burans team expressed keen interest in a sustained collaboration with Sama to build individual and institutional capacities to address GBV.
Regional Workshop towards a gendered understanding of	Participants were from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka – including medical students,	Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Sama, along with SOCHARA, conducted in Tamil and Hindi focused on the social determinants of mental health, the implementation of national and

mental well-being, Chennai, Tamil Nadu	psychiatrists, activists working on HIV, queer rights, disability, sexuality and gender-based violence, and community health activists.		state policies on mental health, the structures of community mental health, gaps and areas for policy reform. Participants flagged mental health issues of women workers in informal sectors, sanitation workers and caste-based discrimination in schools as areas that needed to be explored further.
Regional workshop on traversing the landscape of mental health in India: Causes, experiences and responses, Bhubaneswar, Odisha	25 participants representing 16 organizations working on involvement with disability, livelihood generation, menstrual health, gender-based violence, disaster relief, child marriage, trafficking and other related issues	Bhubaneswar, Odisha	Sama had organized this workshop in collaboration with state chapter of the Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA). The social and gendered determinants of mental health, mental health needs in situations of disability, mental health programs in Odisha post-Fani cyclone and the provisions of the Mental Health Care Act 2018, were also covered in the discussions.
Regional workshop on mental wellbeing, Jaipur, Rajasthan	Participants representing various organizations working in the field of health, rights, mental health, women's rights, gender-based violence, livelihood, education, etc	Jaipur, Rajasthan	Sama had organized this workshop in collaboration with state chapter of the Jan Swasthya Abhiyan (JSA). The workshop sought to bring together organizations, institutions, and individuals in Rajasthan working on issues of public health and gender including mental health, women health and rights, disability rights, gender based violence, sexuality, etc., to deepen the collective understanding of varied determinants and experiences of mental health among diverse communities and their implications on existing policy, programs and legal provisions

2. Short Courses and Capacity Building

Title	With whom	Place	Brief Description
National Course on Gender, Health and	41 participants from 16 States/	Delhi	Objective of course is to provide a comprehensive understanding of

Rights	Union Territories) selected from 175 received applications		health through an intersectional understanding and analysis of varied social, economic, cultural, and political dimensions that impact health. Course content covered the issues of mental health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender based violence, etc.
International People's Health University (IPHU) Sessions on Gender, mental health at the International People's Health University (IPHU), Nepal	33 participants mainly young activists, research scholars, midwives, activists, and doctors from all South Asian countries	Kathmandu, Nepal	The IPHU content and discussions covered concepts of equity and health, social determinants; the political economy of health, an understanding of health systems and its transition, impact of trade on health, issues related to access to medicines, etc. Sama contributed to conceptualizing and facilitating the sessions on gender, inter-sectionality, equity in health, as well as a day-long session on mental health and its social, economic and political determinants. The session on 'the political economy of mental health' was conceptualized by Sama together with the Indian academic Ketaki Ranade (KP) who has vast experience of working on mental health. The session reflected on the global discourse of mental health, challenged the prevailing paradigm of biomedical understanding of mental health and raised the significant concern of 'treatment gap', especially in terms of community level mental health care workers and services

3. Research

Title	Description
Study on "Marginalized lives: infertility, childlessness, and health care seeking in resource-poor settings in Nepal and India"	Sama has contributed by conducting a Focus Group Discussion was held with ASHAs in Sonia Vihar, Delhi, and interviews were conducted with Tibetan healers in New Aruna Nagar, Delhi and a MO in Srinivasपुरi, Delhi. Information on patient profiles of

	<p>those seeking treatment for infertility, causes of infertility and treatment plans was also collected.</p> <p>The research brought to light the role played by alternative/traditional systems of medicine in infertility care and the complete lack of infrastructure for the community public health systems to respond to cases of infertility.</p>
Assessments to document preparedness of health system response in Jharkhand	<p>The objectives were to document the response of the health system in providing care and support to the survivors.</p> <p>The serious gaps in knowledge, practice and perspectives amongst the health administrator and health care providers flagged the urgent need for follow ups with the state government and relevant officials towards recognizing and addressing GBV as a public health issue.</p>
Assessments to document preparedness of health system response in Odisha	<p>The objective of assessment was to understand the level of implementation of SOPs on coordinated response to GBV.</p> <p>The interviews/discussions with administrators, senior medical officers, nursing and other staff, OSC staff present at the health facilities, etc., There are several gaps in knowledge and practice. For instance, discriminatory practices such as insistence on police requisition, refusal of treatment, or unethical practices such as conduct and opining on the basis of the two finger test, the continued use of the dated and gender blind proforma, the challenging relationship between the OSCs (coordinated by NGOs) and the health facilities, etc., are still being used despite the existence of newer SOPs.</p>

4. Material production/knowledge creation and dissemination

- Fertility and Infertility Wheel- The fertility wheel was developed by Sama several years back to initiate conversations on issues of fertility, infertility and contraception, and to place them within a gender framework during Sama's training workshops. It is a learning aid that helps to explain some basic aspects of human fertility and infertility, sensitize people in local communities on the issues of gender and social equity and demolish common myths about conception and reproduction.
- 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women (25 November – 10 December 2019)- Towards the 16 focused Days of Activism against GBV, Sama developed a set of posters on violence against women as a public health issue and that health systems must be held accountable for the health care of survivors.
- Sama developed a *Podcast* which was widely disseminated through social media, list serves, and on email, etc. Podcast Link- <https://youtu.be/qzcRnKEcp7o>

5. Networking, presentation and participation

Name / Theme of meeting	Brief description of activity or initiative led/participated by Sama
Aman Network National Meeting, Jaipur, Rajasthan	Along with Sama, 50 network members representing about 30 organizations from 11 states participated in this annual national meeting. Significant discussions about state and

	national level initiatives, possible amendments to the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, sessions on self-care and burnout prevention techniques, discussion on sexual harassment at workplaces, etc. took place.
National Consultation on Sexual Harassment and Judicial Accountability	Organized by women's and feminist groups in Delhi, it was a platform to discuss and strategize on building judicial accountability in cases of sexual harassment and examine the grey areas. The functioning of the Prevention of Women from Sexual Harassment Act and the gaps in it to deal with certain crucial matters were discussed including cases of sexual harassment within educational and other institutions.
National Level Review Meeting on Mental Health	The meeting was organized by the National Human Rights Commission to discuss rights of persons with mental illnesses, and to review the status of implementation of Mental Health Care Act, 2017. The meeting was attended by government representatives, health professionals councils/associations, mental health institutions, mental health experts and civil society organizations. The recommendations from the presentations and discussions flagged strengthening of capacities of General Physicians, improving undergraduate training on mental health issues, integration of AYUSH services in conventional medical services and use of digital technology in delivery of mental health services.
20 Years of Bapu Trust: Dissemination Meeting	Sama was invited to attend Bapu Trust's celebration of 20 years of work in Pune. Discussions included Bapu Trust's pioneering work on Art Based Therapies and its use in various contexts, on scaling up the 'Seher' program on urban community mental health and the Bali Declaration on transforming communities for inclusion in Asia Pacific.
Re Conference	A global summit organised by CREA on socio-political issues and their intersection with feminism, technology and art.
7th Annual Convening by South Asia Reproductive Justice and Accountability Initiative	Sama was invited to speak on two panels of "Seeking Accountability for Reproductive Rights through National Human Rights Institutions" and "Bringing South Asian Perspective on to global discourse on reproductive rights".
Convention on "Maternal Health and Reproductive Rights in the ICPD – Promises made, are they being kept"	Organized by Sahayog and National Alliance for Maternal Health and Human Rights (NAMHHR). Sama was part of the panel on "Policies and their implications on the ICPD promised and SDG commitments".
COPASAH Global Symposium	Three-day symposium on Citizenship, Governance and Accountability in Health. Session on For-Profit Actors, Global Governance and Accountability in Health. Sama was a part of the Panel on the sub theme of sexual and reproductive health and rights.
Second meeting of Core Group on Women at National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)	Core Group on Women was meeting to discuss the issues relating to rights of women enabling them for decision making roles, sexual and reproductive health rights, surrogacy, child sex ratio and status of implementation of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act.

Know Your Body Know Your Rights 2019 Cohort	Organised by YP Foundation for a cohort for their fellows where Sama presented on the theme of “Body Politics” using the illustration of Surrogacy.
Consultation on Stress management and burnout prevention	Organised by TARSHI to share learnings from a project by Nazariya and TARSHI on assessing self-care needs of activists working on gender, sex and sexuality, LGBTQIA+ and allied issues. Highlighted the key observations, findings and possible ways forward to address stress, burnout, and self-care needs of activists.
Consultation on Sexual and Reproductive Rights of Sex Workers	All India Network of Sex Workers organized the consultation for sex workers. The discussion on MTP Act and proposed amendments was facilitated by Sama team
Collaborating for Safe Abortion Advocacy: A Civil Society Strategy Meeting	Organized by MASUM to disseminate their study on access to abortion care and to review the situation of safe abortion in India.
Participation in National Consultation on Access to Medicine, Pricing and Transparency	The consultation was organized by Third World Network (TWN) and MSF Access Campaign. Abhiti from Sama attended the consultation. The key issues discussed during the meeting included drug pricing, including that of anti-cancer medicines, transparency within the system and access to medicines, use of TRIPS flexibilities, accountability of patent office, state of the Indian pharmaceutical industry and policies for access to treatment and medicine for rare diseases.
Participation in the first Meeting of Sub-Group on Vaccine Confidence by the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI)	The objective of this meeting was to discuss developing interventions for enhancing vaccine confidence, starting from understanding its scope, available database and identifying indicators. Sama was invited to be a member of the first meeting of the subgroup on vaccine confidence. During the meeting, vaccine confidence was discussed as a social and psychological phenomenon that includes confidence of the individual, provider and political intent.
National Consultation on Do Not Attempt Resuscitation (DNAR)	ICMR is in the process of drafting a position paper on ‘Do Not Attempt Resuscitation (DNAR)’ with the help of experts to guide treating physicians on taking a decision on whether or not to perform Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) in situations of incurable diseases or where the patient’s chances of survival are extremely low. Sama was invited to attend the Consultation meeting as a panelist in the session on ‘Legal Perspective on DNAR’ during the National Consultation meeting by Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR)
Meeting with Rajya Sabha Select Committee on Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2019	Sama staff presented Sama's views on the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2019. The written and oral submissions provided a comprehensive and reasoned critique of the Bill, where Sama advocated a relook at the definition of infertility, eligibility criteria for intending parents, requirement of close relative to be a surrogate mother, insurance cover and the model of altruistic surrogacy.
Webinar on ‘No Health for All	A webinar organised by Women Deliver on “No Health for All

without Gender Equality'	without Gender Equality: Sustaining Momentum on Girls' and Women's Rights in UHC," attended by Sama staff. Sama presented country experience, best practices, and tools to inspire and guide advocacy in global and national contexts.
World Conference on Access to Medical Products: Achieving the SDGs 2030	The conference was jointly organized by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and World Health Organization (WHO) with an objective to accelerate access to medical products for achieving universal health coverage in the context of SDGs. There were multiple sessions conducted on issues aligning with the SDGs and UHC keeping in view the interest and involvement of big pharmaceutical companies, investors, international research institutions and other actors.
UN High Level Meeting (UNHLM) Universal Health Coverage (UHC)	Sama was involved from April to September 2019 as part of the Alliance for Gender Equality and UHC in providing inputs to drafts of the Political Declaration to ensure that the final UHC declaration reflects universal, affordable, and accessible health care that is inclusive, equitable, and gender-just. The process of informing the various drafts of the Political Declaration from a gender equality and sexual and reproductive health rights context was facilitated throughout this period by Sama.
Nairobi Summit on 25 years of International Conference on Population Development (ICPD+25)	Sama contributed with inputs to the Nairobi Commitments draft - to centre-stage development in the ICPD commitments, structural inequalities within the scope of SRH, access as well as accountability and quality of the public health system including SRH services. Sama staff and participated in plenaries and side events on a range of issues including access to safe and comprehensive abortion care in the global scenario, SRH financing and UHC, access to SRH for women with disability and young people's leadership in building the SRH agenda.
16 th Indian Association for Women studies (IAWS) Conference,	At the 16th IAWS Conference on the theme <i>Constitutional Principles in 21st century India: Visions for Emancipation</i> , Sama was invited to co-coordinate the Sub-theme 8 on <i>Citizens/People, Laws and Right to Life</i> . Sama along with Sneha Gole from Pune University co-ordinated the subtheme which included drafting a concept note, conceptualising the Sub-theme sessions during the conference, mobilising paper presentations, participation, etc.
Presentation on Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2019 at "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in India: Reviewing Laws, Policies and Practices"	Sama staff spoke about Sama's work on surrogacy and Assisted Reproductive Technologies regulation in India.
Talk on Breaking the Silence on (In)fertility during Women Deliver Conference	Sama was invited to be part of the session co-organized by Centre for Reproductive Rights, World Health Organization and Share Net International. The speakers were from National Birth Equity Collaborative, World Health Organization, International Youth Alliance for Family Planning

	and Women Deliver.
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6. Monitoring & evaluation (M&E), Strategic planning and Staff Capacity Building

Activity	Brief Description
Project Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Project specific monitoring was carried out along with consultants for two of the projects focusing on strengthening sexual and reproductive health rights in Ranchi, Benares and advancing health system response to GBV in Odisha as well as short courses in Hindi and English on gender, health, and rights.</p> <p>The monitoring process involved regular pre and post assessments on conducted activities under projects. The M&E processes facilitated insights into the progress in understanding of girls and women participants from the community, provided lessons for planning future activities using preferred methodologies.</p>
Strategic Planning Process	<p>The SPP was organized with thought that at the juncture of two decades of work, a strategic planning process would be useful to plan Sama's goals in keeping with the organisation's vision and mission. A two-day process was initiated in October, 2019. The workshop was facilitated by an external resource person.</p> <p>The strategic plan process provided direction to Sama's work over the next 3 years. This will enable Sama to prioritize and proactively seek opportunities to be engaged at the domestic, regional and international levels, mobilize resources, and build capacities of the team to take forward Sama's goals, mission and vision.</p>
Staff Retreat	<p>A retreat was held from 25-27 April, 2019 at Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry where the team spent time discussing organizational processes; team building, understanding individual expectations from the organization and the team</p>
Staff Capacity Building	
Feminist Leadership, Movement Building and Rights Institute (4 th to 11 th August 2019)	<p>A course by CREA in Kathmandu, Nepal was organized to strengthen feminist solidarity and build strategies for collective power of social transformation. Sama staff participated in the course and discussions on various issues such as abortion rights, rights of persons with disability and surrogacy facilitated by resource persons who included activists, community practitioners and academicians.</p> <p>The Institute provided a space to young feminists from South Asia to learn from each other and understand the similarities and different realities of their respective countries.</p>
Sexuality and Mental Health Institute	<p>Sama staff attended the Institute organized by the organization Anjali in Kolkata. The sessions at the Institute</p>

(16 th to 21 st September 2019)	were facilitated by academics, mental health experts and activists and were aimed at deconstructing gender, sexuality and mental health to explore the linkages between them and to understand the mental health law, policy and institutions in India.
Workshop on Access to Medicines, TRIPS and Patents (17 th to 21 st December 2019)	Sama staff attended the workshop organized by Third World Network, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan and Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai. The workshop was an introduction to many technical aspects of patentability, compulsory licensing and the campaigns and advocacy actions on in different parts of the country.
2nd International Symposium on Community Health Workers (CHWs) (22 nd to 24 th November 2019)	Sama staff participated in the Symposium hosted by International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh in collaboration with Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Government of Bangladesh; James P. Grant School of Public Health (JPGSPH), BRAC University, Bangladesh; and Save the Children at Dhaka, Bangladesh. In the three-day conference, past challenges and successes of the CHWs were discussed in order to formulate strategic pathways for better community based health programmes for prevention and control of NCDs and towards UHC and SDGs targets.
International People's Health University (IPHU) Sessions on Gender, mental health at the International People's Health University (IPHU), Nepal (Feb 2020)	Sama staff attended the IPHU held in Kathmandu. The course focused on health, social determinants, mental health and access to medicines.