

Gendered Narratives of 'Respectability': Migrant Garo Women and Their Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Authors : A. Drong, K. S. Kerkhoff

Abstract : Migration affects women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. This paper reports on the social constructs of gender, and livelihood pursuits as beauty parlours workers amongst the young Garo women in Bangladesh, and studies changes in their accessibility to the healthcare services due to migration and livelihood. The paper is based on in-depth interviews and participant-led group discussions with 30 women working in various beauty parlours across the city. The data indicate that social perceptions of 'good', 'bad' and 'respectable' determine the expression of sexuality, and often dictates sexual and reproductive practices for these women. This study also reveals that unregulated work conditions, and the current cost of local healthcare services, have a strong impact on the women's accessibility to the healthcare services; thus often limiting their choices to only customary and/or unqualified practitioners for abortions and child-births. Development programmes on migrant indigenous women's health must, therefore, take the contextual gender norms and livelihood choices into account.

Keywords : gender, indigenous women, reproductive rights, sexual rights, Garo, migration, livelihood, healthcare

Conference Title : ICSRHR 2019 : International Conference on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Conference Location : Singapore, Singapore

Conference Dates : March 28-29, 2019