

Women's Major Group

Women's Major Group's Intervention to

High Level Political Forum 2022
Session

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by Daksha Vaja (not delivered due to time constraints)

Education and Awareness in S & T for Health and Human Right in Sexual and Reproductive Health

I'm Daksha Vaja, Community Science Center, Vadodara, India, speaking on behalf of the Women's Major Group. We would like to talk today about the importance of education in Science, Technology & Innovation towards Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and Gender Equality, at the intersections of SDG 3, 4, 5 and 17. Especially in the context of COVID, we have seen loss of decades of progress in terms of gender equality and the rights of women, girls and gender-diverse people and their needs stopped being considered essential.

Lack of scientific education, and access to technologies, exacerbate harmful gender stereotypes and taboos, which is further heightened for persons whose gender expression, roles, and norms are non-conformative. Gender inequality, extreme poverty, humanitarian crises and harmful traditions, with the recent addition of the COVID-19 pandemic, all turn menstruation into a time of discrimination, which can undermine the enjoyment of fundamental human rights to sexual and reproductive health (SRH).

All persons who menstruate, experience negative health consequences when they lack supplies and facilities to manage menstrual health. Stigma associated with menstruation-related disorders or pain, adversely affects their enjoyment of health and well being, contributes to higher rates of school absenteeism and poor educational outcomes, perpetuating gender inequality.

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Studies have shown that education in S&T can bring about a change in these harmful stereotypes towards SRHR.

Poor access to safe practices of managing menstrual hygiene also limit job opportunities for women, girls and gender diverse people. They may refrain from taking certain jobs or be forced to forgo working hours and wages.

Lastly, water and sanitation facilities that are safe and inclusive of the needs of all persons, along with a sufficient, safe and affordable water supply are basic pre-requisites for managing menstrual health management.

Therefore, education on and access to Science, Technology, & Innovation towards Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights are needed to achieve gender equality and fulfill the rights of women, girls and gender-diverse people especially in the recovery from the pandemic.