

AMCHSS Seminar Series

Speaker: Dr.Sharad D Iyengar, Chief Executive, Action Research & Training for Health (ARTH), Rajasthan and Adjunct Professor at the Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University, Durham, USA

Interventions in Maternal and neonatal care - SAMPARK and a rights based alternative to target and incentive based approaches to family planning – TARUNI: Experiences from ARTH, Udaipur

Venue: AMCHSS Seminar Hall

Date: April 10, 2019 Time: 2.00pm- 4.00pm

Sampark: An intervention to improve the effectiveness & quality of referral and emergency maternal and neonatal care in the public health system of Rajasthan

Taruni: ARTH is currently implementing a field based “Taruni” intervention that presents a rights-based alternative to the state targets and incentives driven FP regime (especially Mission Parivar Vikas) in Rajasthan. The intervention comprises of encouraging women to self-test for pregnancy by establishing a cadre of women community health entrepreneurs who sell RH commodities (including pregnancy test kits) as a nominal cost, access to a local call centre for consultations and to local rural clinics for RH Services including medical abortion, introduction of levonorgestrel IUS as a low cost reversible limiting option and engagement of women to support women’s choice and autonomy. The YouTube link includes information on Taruni within a 15 minute film on ARTH. Taruni has grown from 180,000 to 600,000 population and in the next phase we are looking at scaling to cover most of a district. The experience thus far has already thrown insights on policy and programmes around FP 2020, and how they impact women’s rights and choice in northern India.

Brief biographical sketch of Dr.Sharad Iyengar



Dr. Sharad Iyengar trained in Pediatrics and Public Health in India. He was involved in research and community interventions for Maternal and Child Health and Family Planning at the Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education & Research, Chandigarh (PGIMER, Chandigarh) in the eighties, then worked for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in India from 1990-1998, providing technical assistance on contraception, maternal health, safe abortion and neonatal health care for large Area Development Projects. Since 1997, Dr. Iyengar has headed Action Research and Training for Health (ARTH) (www.arth.in), a not-for-profit health organization based in rural-tribal Rajasthan, north India. ARTH's work features research, service, innovation, community action, training and support to government health systems and policy. A recent focus is community entrepreneurship for sexual and reproductive health. Dr. Iyengar is a member of policy guidance committees of the Ministry of Health, Govt of India and the Govt of the state (Rajasthan) in which he lives and works. These include the National Maternal Health Technical Resource Group, the Core Committee to amend the abortion law, the National Human Rights Commission's Core Group on Health, and the Advisory Group on Community Action, a national standing committee to promote community action and accountability within health systems. He was a member of the Scientific Advisory Group of the Indian Council of Medical Research-ICMR (2009-2013). From 2000-2007, Dr. Iyengar served as Co-Chair of the Gender and Rights Advisory Panel and from 2008 to 2013 as a member of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Group (STAG), of the WHO Human Reproduction Programme (HRP/RHR) at Geneva. Dr. Iyengar serves as Adjunct Professor at Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University, in which capacity he teaches global health. Apart from public health interests, Dr. Iyengar takes a keen interest in long distance bicycling.