



# **Disability, Gender, Sexuality & Rights**

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**Conference on Disability, SOGIE and Equality in Asia,  
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**Who are we?**



- Feminist human rights organisation that strengthens feminist leadership, addresses gender – based violence, increases voice and visibility of marginalised people and expands sexual and reproductive freedoms of ALL people.

***Building the self- confidence, leadership and knowledge of all women, girls and trans people about their sexuality and human rights; and creating feminist platforms to challenge oppressive norms and power structures will enable women and girls to make their own decisions, exert control over their bodies and demand their rights.***

- Through four main strategies of capacity-building, knowledge building, public education and advocacy we advance a feminist and intersectional discourse to advance women human rights.



# **Our politics Disability & Sexuality**



- Disabled people have the same sexual rights as everyone else- the right to receive information about their bodies, make decisions about their sexual lives, seek pleasurable experiences, and avoid unwanted or painful ones.
- We do not see disability as a special-interest issue, but rather as integral to advancing human rights, social justice and feminism. We focus on the intersection of sexual rights and disability.
- Challenge the very construction –'normal', which bodies are desirable, where pleasure is located, the very underpinnings of masculinity and femininity as tied to able-bodiedness or reproduction.
- The guiding principle for our work is to ensure that it is **self-led** and CREA acts solely as a catalyst that can bring together a diverse group of organisations and individuals to advance the rights of women with disabilities.



**What do we do?**

# Capacity building



- Build understanding of feminists, activists and practitioners on the intersections of disability, gender and sexuality through Institutes.
  - Sexuality, Gender and Rights Institute
  - Abortion, Gender and Rights Institute
  - Disability, Sexuality and Rights Institute (Online)
- Build knowledge, understanding and capacity of Disabled People's Organisations (Anjali, Equals, Point of View and Sruti Disability Rights Center).
- Advance SRHR of women and girls with disabilities in collaboration with disability rights organisations (Anjali, Equals, Point of View and Sruti Disability Rights Center).

# Capacity building



- Trainings conducted for disabled people's organisations have reached out to women leaders, trainers and staff with a focus on building their understanding on gender and sexuality and its interconnections with disability, mental health and well being.
- Participants from women rights organisations, disability rights organisations, SRHR organisations, sex worker groups and collectives etc.
- Workshops and trainings on SRHR with women and girls with disabilities have covered topics of body image, sex and sexuality education, consent, sexual desire, sexual orientation, pleasure, relationships, laws etc.



# Knowledge Building



- Expanding discourse : Women, Disabled and Queer, Working together for sexuality and rights, 2008
- Research and Evidence collection : Count Me IN! Research on Violence against marginalised women, 2011
- Academic journals : CREA and RHM co-produced the 2017 issue on Disability and Sexuality. Arrow for Change publication on Women with disabilities, sexual and reproductive.
- Global Dialogue on Disability, Sexuality and Rights, 2017 .This convening was conceived as a space to address key tensions and fractures that divide the women’s rights, LGBTQI, sexual and reproductive rights, and disability rights/justice movements.
- Collaborative Resources : toolkits, workbooks, booklets, website and online blog series

# Advocacy



## CEDAW

- Using various national, international and human rights mechanisms as a tool, CREA aims **to build capacity of national disability rights organisations on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)** of women and girls living with disability and multi-stakeholder accountability.
  
- With Kenya being reviewed by the CEDAW Committee in 2017, CREA engaged with Kenyan disability rights organisations to build their capacity on SRHR of women and girls with disability and using CEDAW as a tool for local, national, regional and international advocacy.

# Advocacy



## CRPD

- Partnering with Nepalese disability rights NGOs and networks in relation to the CRPD reporting process. CREA is contributing to build capacity in the integration of Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRR) issues in broader disability discussions, while holding SRR specific discussion and **prepare a shadow report** with that focus.
- CREA has mapped and synthesised the concluding observations of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- In August 2016 CREA organized a Inter-Country Strategic meeting on enhancing State's accountability for Sexual and Reproductive Rights of women with disability with participation of 15 civil society representative from Kenya, India, Nepal and Uganda.

# Advocacy



## Women Rights and Sexual Rights Movemnets

- Influencing the agenda at regional and global conferences to include conversations, participation and representation of the issue of Disability & Sexuality.



# Public Education



# Skin Stories

The blog covers a range of stories from women with disability spanning whole spectrum of physical disabilities, psychosocial disabilities, mental health conditions .The aim of the blog has been to create a space where women with disabilities can share their narratives and their explorations with gender and sexuality.



# Skin Stories

Point of View organized an inclusive day of film screenings titled **Skin Stories: love. desire. disability.** The screening centered the romantic and intimate lives of people with disabilities.



# #Abortthestigma



MYTHS	FACTS
<p>HAVEN'T YOU THOUGHT ABOUT THE EMOTIONAL DAMAGE THIS ABORTION WILL CAUSE FOR YOU?</p> 	<p>STUDIES SHOW THAT PEOPLE FEEL <i>RELIEF</i> AFTER AN ABORTION. THERE'S THE SAME CHANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES CARRYING A PREGNANCY TO TERM.</p> <p>TO SUPPORT MY MENTAL HEALTH, SUPPORT ME!</p> 

**C** | #ABORTTHESTIGMA  
crea for safe abortion access & reproductive justice. [creaworld.org](http://creaworld.org)

MYTHS	FACTS
<p>ONLY WOMEN GET ABORTIONS.</p> 	<p>ANYONE WITH A UTERUS MAY NEED AN ABORTION. OUR REPRODUCTIVE ORGANS DON'T DETERMINE OUR GENDER, SO TRANS AND GENDER-QUEER PEOPLE NEED SAFE ABORTION ACCESS TOO.</p> 

**C** | #ABORTTHESTIGMA  
crea for safe abortion access & reproductive justice. [creaworld.org](http://creaworld.org)



# #SuspendJudgment



IS YOUR IMAGINATION LIMITED TO THINKING OF DISABLED PEOPLE AS:

- THE SUFFERING INNOCENT
- THE IDIOT
- THE SACRIFICE
- THE DE-SEXUALIZED
- THE BUTT OF A JOKE
- THE SUPERNATURAL
- THE VILLAIN
- THE MONSTER
- THE OVERCOMER
- THE HEROIC

MAYBE, TOO QUICK TO JUDGE?

DISABILITY IS NOT A CHARACTER TRAIT!

## SUSPEND JUDGMENT

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www.crippled-pilgrim.com

## SUSPEND JUDGMENT

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# Challenges



**Sexuality is not seen as a priority and luxury issue**

**Comprehensive sexuality education required: sometimes the focus for organisations is sexual abuse. How to address this, as well as introduce a positive framework on sexuality.**

**CREA's own position as not a DPO**

- *“For pwd male or female problems are the same. Girls with disabilities of course we need to keep more restrictions on time and all.”*
- *“And when boys are sexually abused, they become homosexuals. However the parents do not want that boys will be taught about sexual abuse.”*
- *“Human beings have not degraded so much that they will harass or abuse the blind woman. In thirteen years we haven't heard a single case.”*
- *“We should have a standard for whether a person is fit for marriage.”*

# Way forward



- Lack of information and access to this information on body, sexuality and SRHR issues
- Clear, accurate and multiple accessible formats and ways of creating and providing this information is a non-negotiable.
- Occupying spaces in larger spaces to influence agenda



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMjmhjFtJI>