

**Module 3**  
**Assignment 3**

**Answer the following questions in not more than 200 words.**

1. Reproductive rights are a human right. True or False?

True.

2. Explain why reproductive rights is an umbrella term.

Reproductive rights is an umbrella term as the term covers covers following rights:

- Right to legal or safe abortion,
- Right to control one's reproductive functions,
- Right to access in order to make reproductive choices free of coercion, discrimination and violence,
- Right to access education about contraception and sexually transmitted diseases and freedom from coerced sterilization and contraception and
- Right to protect from gender based practices such as female genital cutting and male genital mutilation.

3. Give a brief overview on India's position on reproductive rights.

In India, the reproductive rights are very much existent at least on papers. These are pretty much liberal as compared to many other third world countries but these revolve around family planning methods more, however the recent amendments of MTP does take into account of unmarried woman, it still excludes a large number of population out of the bracket of reproductive rights. There are certain litigations which limit the liberty of a woman making the reproductive rights more of a pro-service provider and not of the person availing the services.

4. Explain how social and religious views on sexuality can hamper reproductive rights.

Due to social and cultural expectations around female sexuality, there is immense stigma attached to any individual who may engage in sexual activity and also might be pregnant. When an unmarried individual seeks an abortion, they are bound to face several restrictions and problems. For getting access to the services (even though the services are very much existent according to the reproductive rights) the unmarried individual sometimes have to pay more than the married people.

5. Explain how Indian society perceives motherhood.

In India, motherhood is always perceived as a sacred act. It limits a woman's responsibility to motherhood only. Now, this again reiterates the patriarchal norm that a woman's only job is to give birth to a child, and nurture it. This is a coerced mechanism on women who do not have those motherly instincts, limiting their freedom.

6. How does patriarchy restrict access to abortion services?

It limits the woman's job to motherhood only. It denies agency - which means do not allow them to make any decision regarding their own body. It can be seen when by religious means patriarchal norms reinforce and keep the rights of an unborn foetus above the rights of the mother.

7. How do prejudice and bias on the part of service providers affect access to safe services?

The abortion service providers can sometimes hold social prejudices and cultural biases as well. They hold prejudice for providing the abortion service only to married people which kind of stigmatise the abortion and again forces unmarried people to opt for unsafe abortion services which are dangerous for their health and denies the right to health as basic right.

8. What are some of the challenges facing unmarried persons while seeking abortions?

In India female sexuality is stigmatised given the social and cultural expectations a woman is denied to engage in sexual activity before marriage. So, if an individual tries to terminate pregnancy for whatever reason, because of the fear and stigma associated with the female sexuality the individual might seek for unsafe abortions. This puts the individual's life on risk and also adds to the extra trauma.

9. Why is centering reproductive rights around family planning problematic?

The present MTP act in India does allow abortion considering family planning as a significant facet, this does not takes the account of reproductive right of an individual - right to bodily autonomy, privacy, health and many other rights. It fosters the patriarchal norm that only married women do engage in intercourse, and also any person who does not recognize as a woman can feel alienated. The present act gives the control stick in the hands of medical practitioner and not to the individual seeking the abortion. So, there is still a scope of improvement in Indian MTP act making abortion inclusive of all stakeholders.

10. How does a legal framework help counter discrimination against women?

The legal vocabulary and the language used in the MTP act and the discourse around abortions, are pro-service providers. It does not place pregnant persons at the centre of the dialogue. It is hence essential to incorporate more inclusive terms and construct a rights based framework that takes into consideration the needs and requirements of the pregnant person.