

## Why Does She Need Another Child? Reproductive Rights of Women with Disabilities in Kashmir

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**Abstract**—Disability is highly stigmatized, and people with disability are perceived to be dependent, incapable, passive and in need of care. The disabled population is never a homogeneous category; it consists of people from different class, gender and age. Nevertheless, disability impacts everyone in a different way. The social exclusion of disabled people is prevalent everywhere, but women with disabilities occupy a more marginalized and de-valued position based on their disability, coupled with the parameters of caste and class. The dual oppression of ableism and sexism undoubtedly puts a disabled woman in an extremely marginalized position. Women with disabilities remain largely unheard of, and are often invisible from the social map of society. They undergo a multitude of problems, and some of the important areas remain their reproductive health needs, reproductive rights and related experiences. The reproductive health needs of disabled women have not received much attention because of the pre conceived notions that they are not sexually active, don't have reproductive needs, and are not capable of bearing and rearing children. Disabled women are often looked upon as passive receivers and those in need of help and care. It is assumed that they may not be able to take important decisions related to their reproductive health. So, their reproductive rights are infringed upon and violated. Control over reproduction is a basic need and a basic right for women. Although the important conventions like ICPD,1994 (International Conference on Population and Development), the CRPD,2006 (Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and the women's movement, have asserted the need to fully implement the reproductive rights at par with the fundamental and human rights, yet the voices of disabled women are almost absent. Women are expected to carry most of the responsibility and risk of birth but have largely been excluded from decision making in personal relationships.

In line of the above discussion, this paper draws on evidence from the narratives of disabled women and their family members. This paper analyzes the intersection of disability with the right to reproductive freedom. The objective is to study the knowledge and issues of reproductive rights for disabled women in Kashmir and to study if disability affects the decision making process for them. The sample consists of married disabled women who have children. The participants and their family members shared their experiences that clearly show that the reproductive freedom and reproductive rights were violated.

**Keywords:** Disability, Reproductive Rights, Decision Making, Violation.

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