Donald Trump's Anti-Abortion Order Will Affect Women in Developing Countries the Most

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Donald Trump's anti-abortion executive order prohibits giving US funding to any international non-governmental organisation for abortions, or even including abortion in their advice to women. This hampers the work of all the health aid organisations which attempt to bridge the gap in reproductive and maternal health care.

Indian Express reported that in 2015, USAID spent $21 million on Family Planning and Reproductive Health in India, and in 2014 they spent $13.9 million. If this funding is blocked, it may affect the women of rural India the most.

An article on *Scroll* reported that almost 25 percent of funds from USAID India is used in family planning and reproductive health services — these include the medical termination of pregnancies, and efforts to train, inform, educate and communicate on the subject or reproductive and maternal health.

The policy, also known as the Mexico City Policy or the global gag rule, will cut off funding to organisations like International Planned Parenthood Foundation and Marie Stopes International, for the programs that provide women's health checkups, contraception and counselling.

The global gag rule not only tells the foreign NGOs how their funds can be used, but also states that they want to be "eligible" for US Family Planning assistance, they cannot spend their own money, or money from any other sources, on providing abortion or abortion-related services. These abortion-related services include distribution of information, supplies and counselling to women.

This is expected to affect maternal and reproductive health across the developing world. The Guttmacher Institute's data of 2016 says that the $607.5 million in US aid that has been used for family planning, has granted 27 million women access to contraceptive choices, averted 6 million unintended pregnancies, and prevented 2.3 million abortions.

A press release by Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) stated unsafe abortion as one of the five main causes of maternal mortality across the world (along with haemorrhage, eclampsia, sepsis and obstructed labour). 13 percent of maternal deaths around the world are because of unsafe abortions, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). These rates are even higher in Latin America, conflict areas and refugee camps.

MSF said that research for the past decade has shown that policies banning medical providers from educating women about abortion and family planning options leads to more unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions and death, and high rates of sexually transmitted diseases like HIV.

A policy like this not only denies women the right to access abortion services, but restricts the access of contraceptive options, information, and the right to be educated. The lack of access to contraceptive options, might only increase the number of unwanted pregnancies, and hence, the number of women who need abortions (who will have to resort to unsafe methods).

In case you were wondering in what ways Trump's presidency might affect the rest of the world, his first move is to restrict the agency of women, as well as deny them the right to information.

Tags: abortion, Donald Trump, global gag, health, health care, maternity, mexico city policy, mothers, reproductive, rights

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