

Advocates from Nine Countries Call for Action on Uterine Prolapse and Launch International Database.



Washington, DC June 21: Inspired by reports from Nepal that prolapse causes extreme suffering to women, advocates for women's health in Asia and Africa have expressed interest in exploring the extent and gravity of the ailment in their own countries.

The informal agreement represents a breakthrough for Samita Pradhan, a leading Nepali expert on prolapse, to move the debate on prolapse beyond Nepal where more than 600,000 women are affected.

Ms Pradhan (seated left), who heads the [Women's Reproductive Rights Program \(WRRP\)](#) in Nepal, described the ravages of prolapse at a panel during the recent [Women Deliver](#) conference in Washington (June 7-9). She later held a series of informal meetings with delegates from Haiti, Tanzania, Ghana, Bhutan, Afghanistan, India, Sudan, Nigeria, and Pakistan.

Several described prolapse as a problem, but said that it had received little attention from their governments. They asked to stay in touch with the Nepali campaign and expressed interest in working together to lobby international agencies. The WRRP is developing an international database of contacts and welcomes inquiries about uterine prolapse.

Meanwhile, Ms Pradhan took advantage of her stay in Washington to argue that prolapse is caused largely by discrimination against women. She met with: the staff of Congresswoman Lois Capps, who recently sponsored a bill on maternal health in the US House of Representatives ([The MOMS Act](#)); staff from the Foreign Relations Committee; the Senate Appropriations Committee; USAID; the US State Department; the office of the US Ambassador for Global Women's Issues; and several leading NGOs.

Last weekend, Ms Pradhan also headlined an event by the America-Nepal Women's Association, a leading diaspora lobby group. The event was [broadcast live by DCNepal](#), an online television station for Nepalis living abroad, and was watched by 3,000 viewers.

During her visit, Ms Pradhan drew on a new 20-minute film about her work in the East of

Nepal. The film, '[Saving the Womb](#),' was made by The Advocacy Project and features an interview with a woman who was beaten up by her husband when he learned she had prolapse. It also includes footage of a protest by women who padlocked the gates of the district health office in Siraha earlier this year in an effort to obtain surgical treatment. The authorities conceded after a few days.

In a patriarchal society like Nepal, the empowerment of women lies with men, and the film ends with a visit to Shiv Laxman Raut, a farmer in the village of Karjinha and his wife Malati Raut, who spent many hours with the WRRP's team. Ms Raut looks on with amusement as her husband describes his efforts to ensure that she was well fed and rested during her pregnancy.

The film can be seen on [YouTube](#). A DVD version can be obtained from The Advocacy Project by contacting dcoffice@advocacynet.org and send \$5 to cover shipping and handling costs.

- To share information about uterine prolapse or join the WRRP database, contact [The Advocacy Project](#) or [Samita Pradhan](#).
- Learn more about [uterine prolapse in Nepal](#)
- Read a [backgrounder on prolapse in Nepal](#) by AP Director Iain Guest
- Read the [Global MOMS Bill](#), currently before the US House of Representatives.
- See [photos of WRRP program](#) in Eastern Nepal.