

Conducting the witness seminar

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This work is part of a collaborative study conducted by SATHI and King's College, London.
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Witness seminars by SATHI

As part of the project on 'Practices, regulation and accountability in the evolving private healthcare sector: lessons from Maharashtra State, India', SATHI conducted three WS during 2017-18-

1. Private healthcare sector in Pune and Mumbai since the 1980s
2. Regulation of formal private healthcare providers in Maharashtra- Journey of Bombay Nursing Homes Registration Act (BNHRA) and the Clinical Establishments Act (CEA)
3. Regulation of formal private healthcare providers in Maharashtra- Journey of Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostics Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994

(Reports are available on SATHI website)

What is a Witness Seminar?

- The witness seminar is a group oral history method.
- This method is particularly considered appropriate for data generation on recent developments or events of significance. The technique is essentially a moderated group conversation, through participation of people who have been directly involved in the particular events or processes, including those who drive changes and those who witness and experience them to create the historical records.
- It enables witnesses to share their knowledge regarding their first-hand experiences and observations.

History of the witness seminar

- It was introduced as a method of historical inquiry almost simultaneously at the Wellcome History of Twentieth Century Medicine Group (**Wellcome Group**) and the Institute for Contemporary British History (**ICBH**) in the early 1990s.
- Witness Seminars have been particularly used a lot in history of medicine in the UK, on topics such as-
 - development of obstetric ultrasound,
 - monoclonal antibodies, human gene mapping,
 - rural medicine, abortion laws,
 - public health in the 1980s-1990s,
 - the re-organisation of the NHS of UK since the 1970s,
 - introducing internal markets in the NHS.
- Less used so far in LMICs including in India

Pre-requisites for conducting the Witness Seminar

- **Focus and clarity of the topic of the witness seminar**
- **Competent Team**
- **Identifying appropriate participants**
- **Capable moderator**
- **Investing in groundwork for WS**

Steps for conducting the Witness Seminar

1. Developing a Concept note along with timeline data
2. Ethics review
3. Identify participants
4. Communication with participants, prepare their short biographies etc
5. Preparing structure, script, information sheet, consent form
6. Selection of moderator
7. Conducting WS- time, moderation, logistics, sitting arrangement, audio-video recording, photographs, storing the recordings, etc
8. Report- Transcription, editing, annotating, approval from witnesses and publishing
9. Contacting the Wellcome trust Library



Thank you!