

National Webinar Series

“Promoting Gender Equality – Strategies and Challenge

23 July - 2 Aug 2020

Organised by Women Study Centre, UCW and Women Cell, UCW, Koti

Report

In times of crisis, when resources are strained and institutional capacity is limited, women and girls face disproportionate impacts. Coronavirus outbreaks, such as the 2003 SARS and 2012 MERS epidemics, were a more deadly for men than women. While men's immune systems are less equipped to fight the virus, the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19 are having far reaching impact against women. Post-COVID, women's employment continues to drop, magnifying the damage to their position in families and society. Employment is one of the strongest predictors of women's empowerment but with employment becoming uncertain, working hours getting longer, wages lower and women's health considerations weaker, hard-fought gains for women's rights are under threat.

As equal citizens, Indian women do expect the state to support them during a crisis. But several states are considering for implementing an increase of daily working hours from eight to twelve hours and some have proposed dilution and removal of labour laws that could effect key provisions around maternity and welfare. In a country where women staying at home is still considered favourably women now need to struggle for their right to education and to be independent and employed. Access to paid and formal employment can become even more scarce for many of these educated and qualified women as many couples will be forced to make the difficult choice of who should stay at home and who should be the breadwinner. The social and economic developments arising out of the pandemic can be regressive and affect the quest for gender equity in the country. Thus has better said traditions that conspired to keep a woman at home have an co-conspirator in the emerging economic landscape.

Gender equality by 2030 is one of 17 Global Goals that make up for United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls is considered not only a basic human right, but also has a multiplier effect across all other development areas. The covid pandemic is already reversing most of the gains that women have made in the last century. The COVID-19 crisis has the potential to further widen gender inequalities. Most of the existing social protection programs are either gender-blind or neutral at best reinforce these inequalities

Thus the webinar series has highlighted the issues that are basic for dignified development of women in Society

Date: 23.7.2020

Webinar – I Topic: Gender Sensitization and Women's Rights.

Speakers:

1. Prof. Rekha Pande, Former Director, Women Study Centre, Hyderabad Central University.
2. Prof. Rama Melkhote, Member, Anveshi Executive Committee & Retd. Professor, Dept. of Political Science, Osmania University (OU), Hyderabad
3. Prof. Shaheeda Murtuza, Professor and Head, Department of Women Education, MANUU, Hyderabad

Date: 25.7.2020

Webinar – III Topic: The gendered impact of Covid-19 on Girls' Education

Speakers:

1. Mrs. Namratha Chadda, Lawyer and Social Activist, Member of ICC, IIT, Bhubhaneswar.
2. Prof. K. Laxmi, Former Principal, UCASS, Osmania University, Hyderabad.
3. Prof. Mrunalini, Dean, Faculty of Education, Osmania University, Hyderabad

Date: 28.7.2020

Webinar – II Topic: Gender Sensitization through Prism of Law

Speakers:

1. Prof. K. Kishori Nayak, Director, IQAC, Mangalore University, Mangalore
2. Mr. Rupesh Mittal, CEO, Mittal Technologies and Cyber Consultant
3. Prof. G. B. Reddy, Coordinator, UPE Centre for IPRs and Facilitation Services, Osmania University, OU.

Date: 30.7.2020

Webinar – IV Topic: Covid-19 and Gender Equality – Future Challenges and Strategies

Speakers:

1. Dr. Sheela Suryanarayan, Director, Women Study Centre, Hyderabad Central University.
2. Dr. Monika Banerjee, Research Scholar, Institute of Social Studies Trust, Delhi
3. Dr. B. S. Sherin, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Comparative Literature and India Studies, EFLU, Hyderabad.

Date: 2.8.2020

Webinar – V Topic: Media and Gender Inequalities

Speakers:

1. Dr. Usha, Asst professor, Ambedkar University New Delhi
2. Mr. Naga Sridhar, Deputy Editor, The Hindu Business Line
3. Mr. Serish Naniseti, Senior Journalist and Author

In the first webinar the speakers provided background information about the role of women's movement in the late 1960s that led to advancement in women's protection laws, empowerment, provision of education to women, and opening of women study centres across universities, colleges and other educational institutions. Speakers discussed about the impact of ongoing pandemic of

COVID -19 on the health conditions of women. She focused on how gender equality should encompass all the the women from various classes, castes, creed and religion, and not just some communities of women should be benefited by the amendments in women's rights. She concluded by stressing on the need for critical understanding of functions of the various institutions and to carry on the fight for our rights at the local level, and then at the global level.

Speakers in webinar II spoke on access to quality education is key to ensuring women's access to work opportunities, decent healthcare, and representation in political and economic processes. The COVID-19 pandemic forced most governments around the world to temporarily close educational institutions to contain the spread of the virus. Evidence confirms that both gender and education are neglected in health outbreak responses

The Speakers in the webinar III highlighted that during the pandemic we require a gender lens to overcome major threats to women's lives and livelihoods associated with COVID-19 – namely, curtailed access to justice institutions, rising intimate partner violence (IPV), threats to women's rights to sexual and reproductive health, growing injustice for workers, discriminatory laws and lack of legal identity, as well as repercussions on forcibly displaced women and those deprived of their liberty and not the least protection from cyber crime.

Considering the severe economic consequences of COVID-19, the webinar IV Covid 19 and Gender Inequality the speakers discussed Is there anything new or has the outbreak simply unveiled old challenges? Can Covid be taken has an opportunity to rebuilt back the gender free society by putting women at the centre of recovery ?The number of young people currently not in employment, education or training (NEET) is rising, and young women are more than twice as likely as their male counterparts to be affected, according to a new International Labour Organization (ILO) report. Thus amid threats to life, health, and livelihoods, the shock wave of the COVID-19 pandemic can also be felt in the digital divide in imparting education and accessing educationthe gendered impact of COVID-19 management has only re emphasized and exacerbated the pre-existing gender inequalities. The weakness of societal structures and cultural backgrounds recalls traditional gender roles almost everywhere. For ex When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women.The speakers spokein depth on reproductive rights of women , missing girls , health aspects and migrant women workers .

In the last webinar the Speakers highlighted Gender stereotyping is an inherent problem in today's entertainment landscape, and children are the most vulnerable recipients of depictions that send the message that girls are less valuable and capable than boys. These are unquestionably felt by audiences, and children learn to accept the stereotypes represented. What they see affects their attitudes toward male and female values in our society, and the tendency for repeated viewing results in negative gender stereotypes imprinting over and over.The speakers spoke on missing girls , health aspects and migrant women workers .

Thus the national webinar highlighted that promoting gender equality plays a very important role in our daily life. Thus gender equality can be promoted through education , law , media by the slogan IF SHE CAN SEE IT, SHE CAN BE IT