

Gender Equality and Empowerment Workspace, Safety and Wellbeing

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Kakoli Banerjee



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Dedication



I dedicate with pride this book to the late Prof. I. Ramabrahmam, former Vice-Chancellor of the Central University of Odisha for motivating me and facilitating the production of this invaluable edited volume devoted to the cause of women. I profusely thank him for the same and promise to take forward his vision of the development of women, girls in particular. He was an ardent supporter of the cause of women and their empowerment. Long live the spirit of VCs like Prof. I. Ramabrahmam, who left us for heavenly abode on July 28, 2021.



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FOREWORD

In the last few decades, equality between women and men in the field of work has improved, but we are still far away from complete parity. There exist persistent disparities between women and men in labour market participation, pay for work of equal value, representation of women in high-paying occupations and managerial positions, and the unpaid care work. Women represent 49.58 per cent of the population worldwide, but contribute to only 37 percent of global GDP and represent only 39 percent of the global labour force. Globally, women occupy only 27.1 percent of managerial positions and only 1 in 10 decision-makers at venture-capital and private-equity firms are women. Despite the widespread support for the principle of equal pay, the gender wage gap persists at about 20 percent at the global level.

Gender inequality is a root cause of violence against women. To eliminate violence and harassment in work, robust and comprehensive workplace policies on violence and harassment are required. Training is important in improving understanding of what constitutes violence and harassment, and ensuring measures to prevent them. Further, gender imbalances in working environment tend to increase the risk of sexual harassment. Therefore, taking steps to increase gender diversity at all levels and address unequal power balances would help to reduce this vulnerability. Organizations need to invest in gender-sensitive hiring processes and in promotion and succession planning for women.

Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment which are integral to the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender mainstreaming involves both intellectual conviction as well as emotional readiness among all the key stake holders to face obstacles at every stage. All international initiatives recognize the importance of gender mainstreaming as a key contributor for economic and social development and respect for human rights. It helps prevent violence against women and makes our communities safer and healthier. Unequal

societies are less cohesive as they have higher rates of anti-social behaviour and violence. Countries with greater gender equality are more connected. Their people are healthier and have better wellbeing. Without women's empowerment and gender equality, societies will not be able to achieve the SDGs and their full development potential. Women's economic empowerment boosts productivity, increases economic diversification and income equality.

Achieving economic empowerment and gender equality for women will require proactive and transformative policies from all stakeholders, including governments, companies, employers and workers organizations, and civil society. Achieving gender equality and women economic empowerment at work requires that the work done by women and men is valued equally and their voices are heard within and outside the four walls of their home, without any bias. It is, therefore, important to extend transparent policies and practices for eliminating gender inequalities in work place by addressing gender discrimination and rectifying gender gaps in organizations.

I appreciate the Central University of Odisha and Dr. Kakoli Banerjee for bringing out this publication which deliberates upon predicaments, problems and contributions of women to the Indian socio-economic scenario. Gender Equality and Empowerment is represented as the core argument by the authors for sustained development of women with a focus on their health and wellbeing at the workplace. My best wishes to the academic fraternity of the Central University of Odisha for this noble endeavour which will go a long way in empowering women.



Dr. Kakoli Banerjee
Presiding Officer
Internal Complaints Committee
Central University of Odisha

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

It gives me immense pleasure to introduce the first volume of this edited book on '***Gender Equality and Empowerment***' -**Workspace, Safety and Wellbeing** to the readers, the maiden and pioneer publication from the office of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), Central University of Odisha. The book has tried to cover the national issues of women like empowerment and leadership, role of women in Covid-19 times, advertising and social media engagements. Gender differentiation practices are potential indicators for claim of women in developmental processes.

The book has been divided into two major parts viz. Technical Papers and Commentaries segregated in three sections. Section 1 deals with Gender Equity, Women Empowerment and Leadership; Section 2 deals with Preventing Domestic Violence and Promoting Health and Wellbeing of Women; and Section 3 deals with Agenda for Action and Instruments of Change. There are 12 Technical Papers, which have been accepted for publication as per the standard norms of IPR-UGC. The onus of the papers under the Commentaries section lies purely on the authors and no responsibility lies with the Editor or the Publisher. The Book has received the ISBN number from SSDN Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi. The designing of the book is not only appealing but also has a fresh look from the routine publications. I am grateful to all the contributors for making this edited volume a success.

The book is a first of its kind from the Central University of Odisha and hope the content of the book will attract large number of students and researchers working on Women Studies.



Prof. P. Durga Prasad

Visiting Professor
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INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

International Women's Day is celebrated with great expectations and a greater trajectory of growth for women in a plethora of academic, developmental and industrial sectors. The process of due recognition of the invaluable contribution of women to the all-round prosperity of communities and nations is round the corner. However, we need to login significant efforts towards achieving this objective of equity and empowerment of women.

That women are under-represented in the General Enrolment Ratio of Higher Education and career progression in Science and Technology is an understatement. Therefore, concerted efforts need to be made in not only promoting the functional cause of Higher Education for women and greater representation in all key activities of socio-economic development is non-negotiable even while removing the glass ceilings surrounding women. Gender parity is a corollary to all State initiatives and individual endeavours. Greater efforts need to be made towards reaching educational scholarships and grants even while ensuring reservations for women in employment. Gender Sensitization and Gender Budgeting will go a long way in achieving the objectives of empowerment of women in Science and Technology, amongst other areas of impact that can make a qualitative difference in the society, is the cogent argument of Kakoli Banerjee.

Khusi Pattanayak critically focuses on the Mental well-being of women in the workplace. The domestic and workplace problems facing women are often daunting. Therefore, she believes that timely counselling, hybrid models of work and effective communication laced with empathy will go a long way in ensuring optimal performance of women in the workplace. Inclusive work culture should comprise the core of the workplace ecosystem, is a lasting answer to the pressing problems highlighted by Khusi.

Women's Rights and their empowerment is seen as a harbinger of change in our endeavours towards equity in the distribution of socio-economic and psychological benefits to women. Participation of women in Higher Education is emphasized as a stepping stone for the emancipation of women. Technical

training, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship will go a long way in uplifting the confidence of women is the functional viewpoint of R.S.S. Nehru.

The plight of the Migrant Labour from a gender perspective is highlighted passionately by Rajadarshini Patra and Meera Swain. The COVID-19 pandemic in particular has exacerbated the problem of women migrant labour is the thrust of their argument. They recommend gender-segregated migrant labour data for extending gender-specific benefits.

Sheela Suryanarayanan and Antarixa Bhardwaj highlight the problem of feminization of the labour force and the concomitant vulnerabilities confronting women. While cautioning the policymakers and public alike about gender stereotypes in the context of work, they recommend the concept of 'Agency' for the empowerment of women.

The positive impacts of Cinema on the Rights of Women and their empowerment are brought to the table creatively by Sourav Gupta. The language of cinema, he strongly believes, will influence the viewers' interpretation and perception of layers of reality relating to women and their development. He recommends that the 'Camera should be encouraged to talk about the predicaments facing the people, especially women'.

Nupur Pattanaik outlines the 'positional change' brought about by the migration of women. She argues that their migration also creates a 'diasporic sphere' and that it creates room for eliminating prejudices and conservative attitudes against women. Women begin to answer the questions of identity and change with a focus on empowerment, is her conclusion.

Gender Equality and Empowerment comprise the core of Sabita's argument for sustained development of women with a focus on their health and well being at the workplace. Indicators of the current status of women and their potential development are highlighted. Problems of sexual harassment and the need for workplace safety are articulated while concluding that punishments are essential for bringing about discipline and good practices.

Sony Parhi and Meera Swain highlight the problems emanating from gender stereotypes, especially those mediated by commercial TV and Cinema advertisements. However, they argue in that the advertisements portray the concept of gender equality without bias and consider advertisements as instruments of women empowerment and change. They conclude that advertising agencies indeed challenge gender stereotypes even while ensuring gender equality.

The power of mass media, especially Cinema, propelled by technology and communication channels in the context of women empowerment is poignantly

captured by N Suman Shelly. However, she expresses her apprehensions about the contribution of cinema in that it depicts ‘partial reality’ about the status of women and their impact on the society. She argues that ‘commercialization has commodified women’. Indian Cinema is a mode of ‘escapism and male fantasy’ is her conclusion.

Aliva Mohanty refreshingly refers to the vulnerabilities facing elderly women. She laments the plight of the elderly as they are not treated well even by their own family members. Yet, resilient as they are, the contribution of the elderly is considered invaluable for the family security and well-being. The challenges facing the elderly are captured sensitively. She rightly concludes that the State and Civil Society Organizations should help establish geriatric institutions alongside review of the existing laws so as to provide greater security and bestow attention on the elderly with dignity.

The role and contributions of women in Indian society, especially the tribal women are imaginatively contextualized in the Indian social structure by Rudrani Mohanty and Amruta Anindita. Specific reference is made by them to the problems confronting the Paraja Tribe of Koraput. Illiteracy and the near absence of any educational support is one of the chief causes of their poverty and misery, they lament. Basic education and productive employment are therefore considered necessary for their upliftment and empowerment. They conclude that basic education and employment are the cornerstones of healthy and productive tribal societies.

The advantages of mass media including social media can be leveraged to maximize activism for ensuring gender equality, opines Aditya Keshari Mishra. He creatively contextualises the ‘Me Too Movement’ (MTM) that is acting as an effective platform for the fight against sexual harassment of women. The role and contributions of social media are critically evaluated with implications for cascading its positive results of movements like MTM. He concludes that social media has streamlined the patterns of communications amongst communities and individuals in so far as the protection of the dignity of women is concerned.

Namrata Chadha flags the problems of the unorganized sector with specific reference to unskilled women workers. Lamenting the shrinkage of employment opportunities in the organized sector, she urges the State and the society to recognize the problems of women in the unorganized sector even while pleading for skilling the women for potentially strong employment opportunities in the organized sector with sustained incomes. Her field evidences provide insights into the challenges of women in the unorganized sector. In conclusion, she recommends strong legislation and enforcement for ensuring the entitlements of women in the unorganized sector in particular.

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1

Gender Inequalities at Workplace in India: Present Situation and Persisting Challenges

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Abstract

Feminisation of labour force with the advent of globalisation meant that formal and informal jobs became more and more available for women, also exposing them to vulnerabilities. A larger proportion of women in India work in insecure work situations; they work as unpaid helpers in household enterprise, as casual workers, they work on lower wages, without written contracts and lesser social security benefits within the work. Women are especially vulnerable because they additionally have lesser access to resources and have double burden of household work. Women's participation in work in India is not only low, it is also declining although the literacy among women increased at a higher rate in comparison to men. The chapter reviews the reasons for lower participation of women in employment, the gender stereotypes in educational and employment choices, gender gaps and vulnerability of situational inequalities that place women in reduced capabilities and possibilities towards empowerment. Women choose subjects in higher educational attainment that are gender stereotypical and work in industrial categories that are an extension of their house work. More focus is required on increasing the skill among women through vocational training so that women have better bargaining capacity in their employment. Moreover, the inordinate mobility restrictions and the present situation of harassment at workplace and pending cases with ICC reveals a grim picture of gender inequality at workplace. Effective programmes and implementation of social security benefit need to be in place. Unpaid work performed by women in and around their homes that contribute to production of food and products needs to be valued. An improvement in ICC training and functioning is required so that cases are cleared effectively. Overall, there is a

need for empowerment education rather than merely towards attaining degrees so that women seek employment and economic independence.

1. Introduction

1.1. Women Workforce in India

According to ILO estimates, the female labour force participation rates in India dropped drastically from 33.8% in 2000 to 26.8% in 2012 and since then it has stagnated at this level (Kapsos et al., 2014). The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data recorded a decline in the percentage of women employed in the last 12 months and paid in cash, from 26.22 percent in 1998-99 to 24.6% in 2015-16. The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18 data reveals that the proportion of women in workforce was much lesser (16.5%) than men (52.1%) (PLFS, 2019).

The male-female gender gap of workforce participation in urban areas (39%) was higher than rural areas (34%) (Table 1). Women’s workforce participation is not only low with a high gender gap; the rate has been declining slowly over the years. In the year 2004-05, almost 29% of women were in workforce, it declined to 22.8% in 2009-10, to 21.9% in 2011-12 and it is lowest in 2017-18 at 16.5% (PLFS 2019). The higher the caste, the lesser is the female workforce participation rate. The workforce gender gap is highest in Sikhism and lowest among Christians. Work Participation Rate in usual status (ps+ss) was highest for Christianity (35.8%) followed by Hindus (35.5), Sikhism (33.7) and lowest among Islam (28.9%). Sikh women are least likely to be in work force as compared to male Sikhs. The gender gap in workforce participation is highest in Sikhism (43.6), followed by Islam (39.5), Hindus (34.9). The gender gap is least among Christians (31.4) (PLFS, 2017-18). Among the Scheduled Tribes, 53.4% of the males and 25.9% females are in workforce, comparatively the least gender gap in workforce participation (27.5%). The gender gap increases among Scheduled Caste (35.1), Other Backward Castes (35.2) and others (39.1) (PLFS, 2019).

Table 1: Workforce participation rate by gender and location

Location	Rural			Urban			Total		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Workforce participation rate	51.7	17.5	35.0	53.0	14.2	33.9	52.1	16.5	34.7

Source: PLFS (2019)

There are a plethora of supply and demand factors that impede women's economic participation, one such factor has been noted in the inter-relationship between the level of educational attainment and female labour force participation. It is noted that Women with no education and the highest educational levels participate more in employment than the moderately educated women. Hence, there is a U-shaped relationship that can be observed between education and labour force participation in India (Fig 1). It has been argued that it is possibly because women's participation of longer years in education kept them away from workforce. However, this hypothesis is disproved with data that reveals the steepest decline of women from labour force in the urban areas has been in the older age group of 45 to 49 years of age. While in rural areas there has been a drop of FLPR among younger women (15 to 29 years). Hence longer years spent in education are not the reason for the lower FLPR. Rustagi (2013) in her analysis notes a decline in FLPR that cuts across all age groups between the time period 1999-2000 and 2011-12. Hence there are other factors that are playing a role.

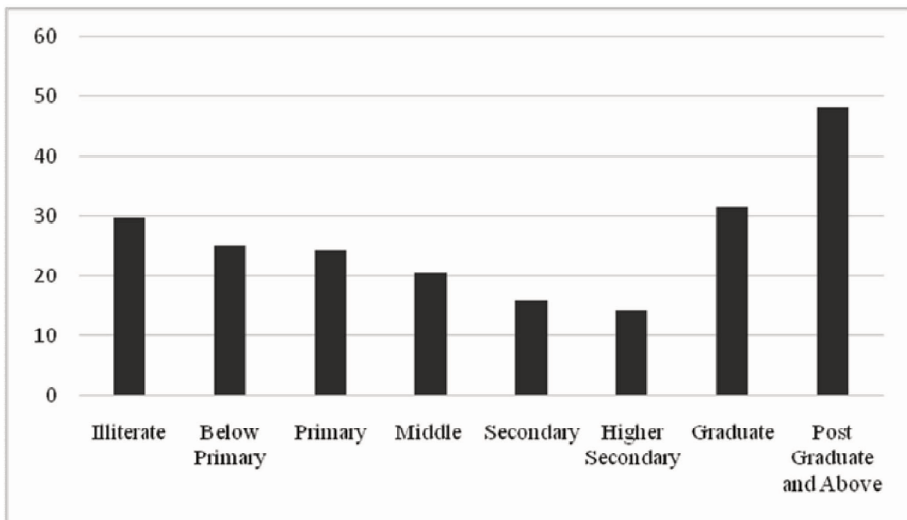


Fig. 1: Percentage of Women in Labour Force by Education in India 2015-17.

A larger proportion of women with Post graduate (48.2%) and graduate (31.6%) degrees and 29.7% of those with no education were in labour force. In comparison lesser women who had completed secondary (16%) and higher secondary (14.5%) levels of schooling were in labour force (Fig 1). Higher income and moderate education has induced staying at home decisions among women in India as there is reduced need for second income. Further statistical interpretation of this data concluded that at very low levels of education, women could be forced into the workforce by the necessity to work because of the

lower household income (Klasen and Pieters, 2013). While there is no necessity to work among the group of women with medium level of education due to a higher household income, they are probably also constrained by social and cultural norms. Women who are slightly higher educated would not prefer low skilled jobs. While women with higher educational attainment were more likely to be working because they may not be as much constrained by social norms. Women in workforce comprises largely of unskilled labour as compared to men. Among those employed, in the age group 15 to 59 years, 69.8% of the males had received formal vocational/technical training as compared to only 38% of the women. More focus is required on increasing the skill among women through vocational training so that women have better bargaining capacity in their employment.

2. Women lagging behind in labour force participation

Social norms, gender gap in wages, hours of work and freedom of mobility and women's choice of profession are the different manifestations of patriarchy on women's participation in labour force in India. Gender stereotypes that are deeply entrenched in the Indian society specifically manifests itself in women's freedom of movement and the hours she spends per day on domestic work, resulting in career breaks and unfulfilled educational and career goals. The lack of mobility among women is clear with half of the women in the NFHS-4 not allowed to go alone to the market, to access health care, and to go alone outside the community. Only 41% were allowed to go alone to all the three places mentioned above. When women are not allowed to even visit alone to necessary service like health care centres, women travelling for higher education or work is unthinkable. Their freedom of movement increases as they get older. It is only in the age group 30 to 39 that 50% of the women are allowed to go to all the three above mentioned places alone. By this age, their educational opportunities would have passed and possibilities of finding work would have decreased drastically and even if they did work at some point of their life, their career break would have increased. Unmarried girls were restricted more (71%) as compared to married women (57%). These inordinate mobility restrictions impact women's employment seeking an opportunity outside the household.

Unpaid domestic work has been and remains unrecognised as an economic activity. Recent National Statistical Office (NSO) survey 2019 revealed that more than 90% of women aged 15 to 59 in India were engaged in domestic work that is unpaid in comparison to very few men (27%) (GoI 2020).

In the Southern States of India, more women were engaged in outside work in comparison to other States. And yet, their household workload remained the same between men and women's workload, adding to women's double burden.

Double burden is one of hurdles to women working in paid work outside the house. The NSSO's time use survey conducted over January to December 2019 revealed that although both men and women in both urban and rural areas spent approximately 4 hours on domestic work, in comparison to men who spend only approximately one and a half hours of his day on domestic work and services, women spend three times more of the time (approximately five hours) on this household work (MoSPI 2020).

Apart from the time that women engaged in unpaid domestic work and caregiving services, there is another kind of hidden silent work that women are engaged. Almost one-third (31.7%) of the women involved in workforce in India, were unpaid helpers in household enterprise¹, as compared to only 8.2% men (Table 2). The percentage of women working as unpaid helpers in household enterprise in rural areas was much higher (38.7%) in comparison to urban areas (11%). These women are not covered under any protective labour legislation. Women's unpaid household work is not covered in the Minimum Wages Act (1948). The Minimum Wages Act (1948) stipulates minimum wages for "anyone who employs, whether directly or through another person any 'scheduled employment'". Moreover, women carry the double burden of household work as well as unpaid household enterprise work. Apart from the unpaid helpers in household industry, 27% of the women work as casual labourers leaving only 21% of women who are employed in regular salaried work (Table 2; Fig. 2). The largest gender gap is noted among helpers in household enterprise, a larger proportion of who are women. While, a larger proportion of men are own account workers and employers as compared to women. This unpaid work as helper in household enterprise is not covered in the Minimum Wages Act (1948). Although a large proportion (approximately one fourth) of both men and women were employed in casual labour, slightly more women were employed in casual labour (27%) in comparison to men (24.3%). The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Bill, 2019 in India, aim to integrate legal enforcement on occupational hazard in all sectors, but are limited to enterprises that appoint more than 10 workers. This leaves out two-thirds of the women working in unpaid or casual forms of employment in India.

¹helpers in household enterprise is defined as those who work full or part time their household enterprises, without receiving any regular salary or wages. They assisted another person living in the same household in running the household enterprise.

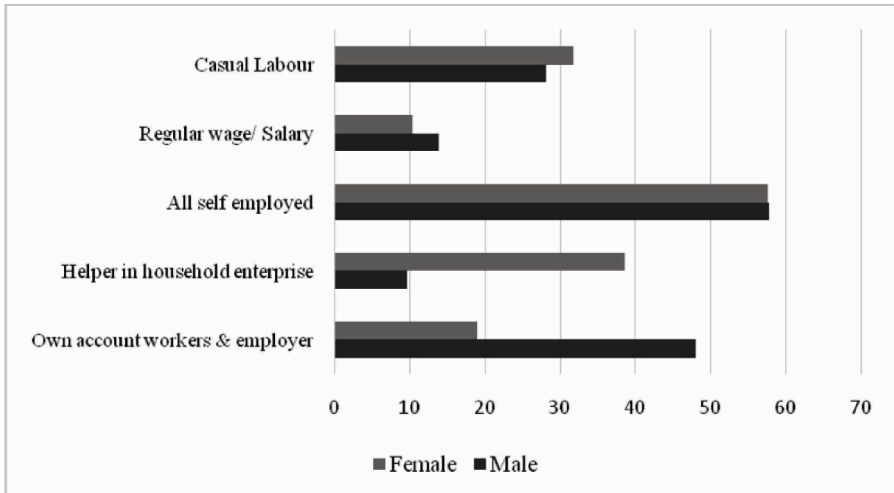


Fig. 2: Workforce Participation by Employment Category - 2017-18.

3. Gender Stereotypes in Occupational Choices

Although women’s enrolment in higher education has increased to almost 50% in 2018-19. In number these accounts to 18.2 million females of the total enrolment of 37.4 million. However, gender stereotype becomes clearer in women’s choices of educational streams or disciplines. Only 28.9% of female students were enrolled in Engineering and Technology in comparison to 71.1% males. Among major sectors, Agriculture, Engineering, Law and Physical Education sectors have the lowest female participation. This has an impact on women’s employment opportunities and the choices they make.

4. Women’s participation in Industrial Division and Occupational Category

Women’s work in the agricultural sector is an irony; although the lowest number of females choose it as a subject to pursue their education, most of the women (73%) in rural India are employed in the agricultural sector as compared to 55% men (Table 3). Women are engaged in a wide range of activities in the agricultural field such as; preparation of land, selection of seed and other work such as; sowing, applying of manure, fertilizer and pesticides, weeding, transplanting, threshing, winnowing and harvesting. Yet, almost half (48%) of the women workers in the agricultural sector were engaged merely as unpaid workers and about one-third (34%) as casual labourers. Only 1.3% women in working in the agricultural sector are regular wage/salaried employees. In contrast most (61%) men working in the agricultural sector were own-account workers or employers. Additionally, although a large proportion of women in

Table 2: Workforce Participation by employment Category 2017-18

	Employment Category	Rural			Urban			Total		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
		1	48.0	19.0	41.0	34.9	23.7	32.6	44.1	20.2
2	9.8	38.7	16.9	4.3	11.0	5.7	8.2	31.7	13.6	
1+2 (3)	57.8	57.7	57.8	39.2	34.7	38.3	52.3	51.9	52.2	
4	14.0	10.5	13.1	45.7	52.1	47.0	23.4	21.0	22.8	
5	28.2	31.8	29.1	15.1	13.1	14.7	24.3	27.0	24.9	
6	All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	

Source: PLFS 2019

8 Gender Equality and Empowerment Workspace, Safety and Wellbeing

rural areas are engaged in agricultural activities, hardly any women have land ownership (6.5% as compared to 43% men) (Agricultural Census 2019). This impacts their access to loan and credits and their overall economic security, self-esteem and overall agency.

Table 3: Participation of Workforce by Industry Division 2017-18.

Industry Division	Rural		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Agriculture	55.0	73.2	5.4	9.1
Mining & Quarrying	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.2
Manufacturing	7.7	8.1	22.4	25.2
Electricity, Water, etc. ²	0.5	0.0	1.3	0.6
Construction	14.5	5.3	11.7	4.1
Trade, hotel & restaurant ³	9.2	4.0	24.5	13.0
Transport, storage & communications ⁴	5.2	0.3	12.7	3.3
Other services ⁵	7.6	8.9	21.5	44.0
All	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

According to the Indian Periodic Labour Force Survey, women workforce in urban areas, as categorised by broad industrial sector, are largely engaged in; ‘other services’ (44.9%), followed by manufacturing (25.2%), trade, hotel and restaurant (13.0%) and agriculture (9.1%) (PLFS, 2017-18). In urban areas the highest proportion of women in ‘other services’, are engaged in the educational occupation (15.11%), followed by domestic work (9.56%) and health care services (5.95%). In the ‘manufacturing’ sector, women in urban areas are employed in textiles (5.32%) and wearing apparels (7.62%). In the ‘trade, hotel and restaurant’ industry women in urban areas are largely engaged in retail trade (8.75%). Clearly women in urban areas are employed in gender stereotypical industrial divisions such as teaching or educational work, domestic work, human health activities, textiles and wearing apparels. All these industrial divisions are an extension of the women’s domestic work. In rural areas women are involved largely in agricultural sector in unpaid, informal, insecure work, without land ownership.

²Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply and Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities

³Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles and Accommodation and Food service activities

⁴Transportation and storage and Information and communication

⁵Financial and insurance activities; Real estate activities; Professional, scientific and technical activities; Administrative and support service activities; Public administration and defence; compulsory social security; Education; Human health and social work activities; Arts, entertainment and recreation; Other service activities; Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods and services producing activities of households for own use; and Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies.

5. Gender Gap in Social Security Benefit

One of the initiatives taken by the Government of India to increase women's participation in workforce was to provide 26 weeks paid leave as maternal benefit under the Maternity Benefit Bill for women's empowerment and legal protection for taking this leave. However, according to the NFHS-4 data, only 36.4% of the eligible beneficiaries availed maternity benefits. The national target of full coverage of maternity benefit by 2030 but no State or UT has achieved this target, as yet. Among the states, Odisha has the highest coverage with 72.6% of beneficiaries eligible for maternity benefits actually receiving it. Even among the regular wage workers, almost half the women were not covered by any social security benefit, half were working without the provision of paid leave, and 66.8% without a written contract.

The Maternity Benefit Act (1961) provides full paid leave for women to take care of her child. The Act was amended from 12 weeks of maternity benefit in 1961 Act to 26 weeks in 2017. The rationale behind this law was that; maternal care is crucial during early childhood for the growth and development of the child. Only 16.5% of women are in workforce and 21% of these women are regular salaried workers. Hence the Maternity Benefit law covering a very small proportion of the workforce stipulates that employers must provide women with paid time off. The benefit has not been able to successfully reach even the women who are eligible for it. On one hand this benefit conforms to gender stereotypes that assume that the child is primarily mother's responsibility and she is the main caregiver for the child. There is an absence of any corresponding benefit for the fathers. Employees are made fully responsible for providing maternity benefits and perceive an incurred cost which is reflected on their gender discriminative recruitment mind-set. Paternity leave also works towards changing the mindset that the mother is primarily responsible for childrearing (Mathew 2019). But merely providing paternity leave and benefit is inadequate. If paternity leave has an adverse effect on their salary, increment and promotion, men would not opt for it.

6. Equal Remuneration

India is a country with one of the highest gender wage gap of 34%, although the Equal Remuneration Act 1976 requires that equal payment be made for the same/similar work and restricts any form of discrimination criteria in recruitment or promotion. The pay gap and the existing discrimination in recruitment, promotion acts as one of the disincentive to women joining and remaining in the workforce. Further, the pay gap increases with age, work experience, and rise in occupational hierarchy – thus disincentivizing the women to stay on in workforce. Apart from equal remuneration, there needs to be an act towards

providing remuneration to all labour that accounts to economic returns. Such as women who participate in household agricultural labour are neither remunerated for their labour nor are they given land ownership which makes them vulnerable due to reduced access to the much needed resource for women's empowerment. The Minimum Wages Act 1948 mainly protects workers on schedule employment and hence primarily covers only the formal sector. It is the formal sector that largely gains from this Act while the informal sector remains marginalised (Menon and Rodgers, 2017).

7. Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace

International laws and policies that are in place to stop sexual harassment at workplace include; the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 48/104 on the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (United Nations 1993). The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (prevention, prohibition and redressal) Act, 2013 provides employees a protection against sexual harassment of women at workplace and for the prevention and redressal of complaints of sexual harassment and for all other related matters (MoLJ, 2013). With reference to the Constitution, this Act protects women's right to work with dignity and her right to life and live with dignity. According to this Act, "Sexual Harassment" includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts or behaviour (whether directly or by implication); (i) physical contact and advances; or (ii) a demand or request for sexual favours; or (iii) making sexually coloured remarks; or (iv) showing pornography; or (v) any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

The Supreme Court formally recognised the significance of sexual harassment at workplace with the *Vishakha v State of Rajasthan* (1997) case of an incidence of rape at workplace (NCW 1997). The judgment, delegated the responsibility of resolving complaints of sexual harassment to Internal Complaints Committees [IC] within their workplace and educational institutions so that women don't have to go through the daunting process of criminal justice. According to the National Crime Records Bureau there were only 401 recorded cases of sexual harassment reported at work or office premises in India in the year 2018. Experts have observed that the official crime figure is a tip of the iceberg as many crimes go unreported (Durani and Sinha, 2018).

The cases of sexual harassment, including sexual harassment at workplace that was registered at NCW (National Commission for Women) accounted to 539 in 2016, and increased to 570 in 2017 and to 965 in 2018 (MoWCD 2019). The increase in cases has also been accounted to; greater awareness among

women about the Law and also possibly due to the ‘#Me too’ movement. In the cities, NCRB recorded an IPC crime of only 88 cases in 19 cities of India for the year 2018 under sexual harassment at work or office premises (MoHA 2018). The highest cases were recorded at Delhi 28 followed by Bengaluru 20 and Pune and Mumbai 12 each.

The number of sexual harassment complaints pending with companies in India increased by 14% of all reported cases in Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 from 11% a year ago. There is a need for prompt redressal and a well-trained internal committee (Bhattacharyya 2019).

A study conducted by Comply Karo Services recorded a much higher number of total cases; 722 in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 which increased to 823 cases in FY2019 in BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange) companies. In FY2018, Wipro recorded 101 cases, followed by ICICI Bank (99), Infosys Ltd. (77), TCS (62), AXIS Bank (47). This survey also found that the members of ICCs had not been given necessary training in 47% of Indian companies and 34% in Multi National Companies, although the Act specifically mandates this. A large proportion (84 percent) of companies in 2018 reported being unaware of the policy, a survey conducted by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and World Economic Forum (WEF) found. The University Grant’s Commission’s survey conducted in 2018-19 found a total of 171 cases of sexual harassment were reported from Indian universities and 20 from colleges and other institutions (UGC 2019). This is an increase of 50 per cent of 94 such cases that were reported from universities and 18 from colleges and institutions in the year 2016. In a situation where only 0.9% of the total instances of sexual harassment ever gets reported as the National Family Health Survey (NFHS, 2015-16) found, it is quite likely that most such cases in workplace go unreported. Kothawade (2019) also notes that, as a result of unclear law on how the ICCs should conduct enquiries, some serious gendered structural problems are reduced to private or official quibbles or misunderstandings.

8. Programmes Supporting Women’s Employment

There are some programmes that are in place to support women’s employment in the country such as; Mahila E-Haat, Standup India, Mahila Shakti Kendra, Women Transforming India and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). However, stronger focus on programmes that overturn the patriarch hegemony is urgently required not only to bring more women into workforce but also to change the Social mind-set. Mahila E-HAAT is an online marketing platform leveraging technology assisting women entrepreneurs and Self-Help Groups to showcase their products

and services. The Stand Up India, launched in 2016 provides bank loans to woman borrowers (NITI Ayog 2017). Mahila Shakti Kendra at the village-level, supports in establishing Women's Empowerment Centres. These Centres are meant to provide skill development, employment, digital literacy, health and nutrition. Women Transforming India is an online contest conducted by NITI Ayog, along with United Nations, India and MyGov for obtaining stories of women who are making a difference in their respective fields. The MGNREGA provides guaranteed 100 days of work to every household. Studies have found that there is an unmet demand that is; a gap between households that demanded work and the households that were provided work under the programme. Women were found to be utilising the programme more as the wage provided by the MGNREGA is lesser than the market rate and given the structural inequalities, women utilise this scheme more than men.

9. Conclusion

Most women are not recorded as farmers and with one-third of the women who are illiterate and almost half without any bank account, there is a need for schemes to address the needs of the women working in the informal sector and working as unpaid helpers in household enterprises. There is a huge gender gap in the proportion of women involved in workforce as compared to men. The gender difference of work participation rate was similar in rural and urban areas. A large proportion of women are involved in agricultural sector and yet they are not land owners, half work as unpaid workers in household enterprises and one-third as casual workers. Women are involved largely in gender stereotypical employment that is an extension of the work they do at home. In rural areas women are largely involved in Agriculture and Fisheries, (crop and animal production), other services (educational, servants and household services) and Manufacturing (wearing apparel, textiles, tobacco and food products industry). The vast majority of women workers are not covered by the national labour regulations because they work as unpaid helpers in household enterprise or casual workers. This, added with a very low percentage of land ownership makes women comparatively vulnerable with a larger extent of dependency on men.

Unpaid work performed by women in and around their homes that contributes to production of food and products should be valued to improve the conditions of such workers. Much lesser women in the workforce have received formal/vocational training as compared to men. Sexual harassment of women at workplace is a factor that deters women from participating in workforce to a full extent. There is a low coverage of maternity benefit to women workers in India as the proportion of employed women itself is very low. Among these

working women, only one-third eligible as beneficiaries receive maternity benefits. This added with gender wage gap impacts the probability of women returning to work post-childbirth and balancing house and outside work. One of the possible strategies would be; to introduce paid paternity leave and link maternity benefit to Employees State Insurance. Training and effective functioning of ICC is required in all institutions. More focus is required on increasing the skill among women through vocational training so that women have better bargaining capacity in their employment.

One of the focuses of women's education in India should be towards gender awareness and overall empowerment, so that women just don't attain degrees but become aware of their rights and are able to apply agency in the daily lives.

Naila Kabeer's concept of 'agency' identifies the process of empowerment through observing discrimination, thinking and speaking about it, gathering the resource required for changes and taking action towards empowerment. Women in India need to be educated on the process towards empowerment through educational institutions and other programmes. This will impact not only the employment sector but several other social aspects such as education, violence against women, health, environment because women will themselves be equipped with knowledge and take up the role of agents of change.

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2

Women's Empowerment Strategies in Indian Higher Education

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Abstract

Today women are the leading figures in society, which cannot be built without their participation. However, women do not use their rights and are not independent. Women must empower in many factors that contribute to India's strength of women: location-urban or rural, social status like caste and class, etc. Many governments have pro-women initiatives at all three different levels like Health, Education, and Political opportunities. However, the gap between government policies and their actual implementation is large. Therefore, it is up to women to empower themselves. The key to gaining economic independence is education. According to the Literacy rate in 2011, the female literacy level in India was 65.46%. More education or having only primary education does not increase productivity but is required for women to attain better-paying jobs. Even if she doesn't have a college degree, this research can convey that women's literacy and education can affect economic development and Empowerment.

Keywords: Higher Education, Strategies, Woman Education

1. Introduction

We believe that everyone, even the citizens of a free nation, must have access to the best possible education. The economy shifted from a manufacturing-based to a piece of knowledge, an information-based one, the concept of territoriality is getting a boost. So I've concluded that education has a role in society's overall socio-economic well-being, not only as a tool for success but also as a means for reducing poverty and ignorance, which leads to better human relationships. For the professional and research-based nature of higher education, colleges and universities should give a great deal of respect to preparing

students for the future and making sure to maintain the success of our country's democracy. Efforts must include everyone, down whatever walls and boundaries that stand in the way of education; attention to be paid to their development of men and women once they have completed primary and secondary education. The Indian National Policy strongly encourages women to take advantage of every career and technical education opportunity that is made available, believing "widening women's participation in the economy will help them keep them out of poverty and promote national development."

2. Empowerment

Traditionally, gender roles tend to grant both men and women the same opportunities in higher education, which hampers gender equality significantly. Equality in education is a fundamental human right. To solve today's education problem, we must focus on women's intellectual development, freedom of expression, personal and family economic rights, and independence (Shetty, Sowjanya and Hans, V. Basil, 2015). Acting to end the ideas of male domination can result in a redistribution of power, transforming institutions established to reinforce or support gender inequality. Egalitarian decision-making has reached a critical mass, with higher education, and particularly concerning women, and must include an effort to bring in educational aspects to nurture those who foster others'.

And,

"Women must be awakened to awaken the citizens. When she leaves, the family, the village, and the country move with her."

-Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India.

3. Higher Education's Concerns and Prospects

Education is a means, as well as an end in itself. In our fast-paced world, understanding and coping with such complexities is essential, so we push for education. Knowledge-driven economic growth is one of note in India's future. Indian higher education must redefine itself. As the world grows, women must become more astute in changing environments to survive. If there is to be long-term growth in higher education, it is critical to re-introduce curricula and learning methods suited to the needs of all students that are non-traditional in gender. Higher education works to counteract societal divisions (Bhat, R.A., 2015)

Feminism

While education gives each person the freedom to understand society and its resources should provide to both genders. Equality and social justice became

major priorities in post-independence India. However, in the decades following the Education Commission's recommendation in 1948, 1964, and NEP (1986, 1992, 2020), gender inequity in Higher Education has remained in place. Women's capacity for learning is a top goal of higher education. These skills and occupations of women are selected based on their employability(Arya, Anita,2000).

Over the years, higher education has had to grapple with Diversifying its disciplines and university options; Breaking down gender barriers, and empowering.

Higher Education institutions and their leaders? How will the proposed measures maximize women's abilities and empower them?

4. Women in Higher Education

The tables below show the literacy rate of men and women at the end of high school. The other two have gender-disaggregated data on higher education enrolment .

Table 1: Literacy Rates in India (1951-2011).

Year	Male	Female	Total %
1951	24.9	7.3	16.7
1961	21.16	15.35	28.3
1971	45.95	21.97	34.45
1981	46.9	24.8	36.2
1991	63.9	39.2	52.1
2001	76.0	54.0	62.38
2011	82.1	65.46	74

Table 2: Higher Education Enrolment as a Percentage of Overall Enrolment.

Year	GROSS ENROLLMENT RATIOS								
	All Category			SC			ST		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2011-12	22.1	19.4	20.8	15.8	13.9	14.9	12.4	9.7	11
2012-13	22.7	20.1	21.5	16.9	15	16	12.4	9.8	11.1
2013-14	23.9	22	23	17.7	16.4	17.1	12.5	10.2	11.3
2014-15	25.3	23.2	24.3	20	18.2	19.1	15.2	12.3	13.7
2015-16	25.4	23.5	24.5	20.8	19	19.9	15.6	12.9	14.2
2016-17	26.0	24.5	25.2	21.8	20.2	21.1	16.7	14.2	15.4
2017-18	26.3	25.4	25.8	22.2	21.4	21.8	17.0	14.9	15.9

(Source: AISHE and UGC annual reports of various years)

The Gross Enrolment Ratio/Gross Enrolment Index is a statistical method used to determine the total number of students enrolled in postsecondary education. The table illustrates that the government has not yet succeeded in increasing enrolment in the Schedule tribe category; in fact, there has been minimal improvement reported in this category.

Table 3: Female University Recruitment by Faculty

Discipline	Total Enrollment	Women Enrolled	% of women to Total Enrolment
Arts	1,591,012	687,069	43.2
Eng / Technology	181,604	11,263	6.2
Law	228,979	20,024	8.7
Commerce	848,804	173,957	20.5
Science	777,740	253,427	32.6
Medicine	142,125	45,054	31.7
Education	90,803	47,557	52.4

Although disparities are present in every aspect of these data, the information is accurate: Although caste, geographic region, and tribe tend to muddle these results, there is enough evidence to show that these findings are factual. Although the number of female engineering students slightly exceeds the number of male students, it is still well below gender parity regarding the faculty in the universities and colleges. The percentage of female students who went on to Commerce was higher, but less than a quarter of all the female students went to the Commerce Stream. Women comprise approximately 54% of the workforce in the arts and humanities, while men are almost half as many in the sciences (Arya, Anita, 2000).

Table 4: Number of females & number of females/number of males in universities

Year	Arts	Science	Commerce	Engineering	Medicine
2000-01	81.4	61.4	55.3	28.7	68.2
2001-02	7.8	64.2	63.1	33.1	68.4
2002-03	82.24	60.55	57.95	29.17	71.19
2003-04	85.70	75.90	51.20	17.5	72.5
2004-05	87.3	84.3	51.6	31.1	53.1
2005-06	77.7	71.2	65.2	36.1	90.1
2006-07	76.9	71.2	60.9	35.8	89.5
2007-08	79.6	71.0	63.53	39.3	88.31
2008-09	86.80	66.90	65.30	39.7	88.31
2009-10	86.0	72.7	67.3	40.3	90.9

Source: Department of Secondary & Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development at http://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/reports_and_publication/statistical_publication/social_statistics/Chapter_3.pdf

More highly educated women benefit economically. Women who have higher levels of education are more likely to hold formal jobs (where earnings are better). Table 5 shows significant progress for females in college. After independence, the new nation set up separate universities and women's colleges. Six decades ago, the number of women's colleges increased by nearly tenfold,

but the percentage of total colleges stayed the same, i.e., 12% Awareness here demonstrates social awareness (Suguna M ,2011).

Table 5: Women at various positions in Higher education

Year	Category	Men (000's)	Women (000's)	Total	Women as (%) of total
2011-12	Professor	76	26	102	25.4
2012-13		88	31	121	25.6
2013-14		93	32	125	25.6
2014-15		102	34	136	25
2015-16		108	37	146	25.3
2016-17		92	33	125	26.4
2017-18		84	31	115	26.9
2011-12	Associate Professor	115	58	173	33.52
2012-13		116	59	175	33.71
2013-14		119	63	182	34.61
2014-15		116	61	177	34.46
2015-16		113	60	173	34.68
2016-17		95	53	148	35.81
2017-18		88	51	139	36.69
2011-12	Assistant Professor	512	340	852	39.9
2012-13		526	350	877	39.9
2013-14		548	363	912	39.8
2014-15		599	385	985	39.08
2015-16		612	396	1009	39.24
2016-17		558	387	945	40.95
2017-18		511	377	888	42.45
2011-12	Temporary Teachers/Adhoc*	36	32	68	47.05
2012-13		42	37	79	46.83
2013-14		46	41	87	47.12
2014-15		55	46	101	45.54
2015-16		59	52	112	46.42
2016-17		34	33	67	49.25
2017-18		33	34	67	50.74

(Source: AISHE and UGC annual reports of various years)

5. Higher Education Redefined

Traditional paradigms see higher education as providing a means to personal growth, broadening a person's horizons, and improving life in general. It's also thought to be a type of social engineering used to achieve social conformity. But, according to Theodore Schultz and Mary Backer, higher education is a critical component of human capital growth.

More market-oriented policies are a challenge to higher education, as we have redefined and reinterpreted the definition of education in recent years, with mixed results. Knowledge and wisdom from generation to generation, but acquired and transmitted to the third. But to fulfill the market's increased demand for competencies, innovation and technological advancement will only boost productivity, necessitating an even greater degree of dynamism for content. It must also reorient itself to serve women who may want to seek more leadership and management roles in traditionally male-dominated fields of study (Bhat, R.A. 2015).

5.1. The following are the distinct needs associated with women & higher education.

- Recognize women as an essential source of human resources in every country; Make a concerted effort to equip women with the requisite set of managerial skills, allowing them to assume decision-making roles; create a consistent paradigm of female leadership with the needs of social advancement in all industries.
- Cooperation of higher education and lower learning by utilizing Higher Education will help the citizens become autonomous.
- Corporate networking and publicity - sending out company newsletters to the general public to ensure that people in all community settings are literate, to prepare teaching and learning packages and materials timing: providing data and moving matter into a technical display.
- Women's Studies, women's movements: propose good ideas for better implementation. The university will provide 100 students each year with research assistantships for part-based studies.

Widening opportunities for women such women citizens of India who belong to scheduled castes and tribes will be able to enroll in training and academic assistance programs, which will allow them to change their circumstances for the better. Challenges of the 21st century Technological and communication innovations have caused transformations in education systems worldwide. In the 21st century, India faces several significant educational problems. The advent

of new options and increasing efforts to overcome gender disparities in higher education put extra strain on leaders (Rouf Ahmad Bhat, 2015). The country faces the difficult task of a knowledge explosion, sluggish growth, and inequitable policies to provide educational opportunities. India's prospects for long-term development, therefore, face a threat. Institutions need to do so by incorporating training and studying female employees (Balve S., 2015)

5.2. Higher education: diversity and dynamic programs

Higher education is responsible for a restructured curriculum that includes skill, gender-sensitive systems, and guidance programs that promote work. In addition, social surveys must review the following to keep social conditions up to date:

- What are the reasons for women's lack of usage and inclusion in technological development? Furthermore,
- What steps should be taken to improve women's access to technology?

Women are hindered by a lack of scientific education and training and the type of work they do. As a result, technology studies to aid women's research and career creation are essential in higher education. To ensure 'Productivity Ethics,' the design of academic policy must include more women's enrolment. As a university course, mass communication becomes increasingly important. In India, a technological revolution is available for women, providing funding for the initiation and the training of women professors and administrators of engineering and technology for five years. To encourage women to pursue careers in science and technology research, women are encouraged to apply for membership in local laboratories near their homes through awards and projects. In addition, women colleges must fund science, vocational, and professional degrees.

5.3. Human Resource Development and Technical Education

Higher education, as the peak of the educational structure, socio-political, economic and cultural edifices today, training for technical work is critical to successful human resource development. Advances in women's participation in modern technology, including training, the interaction between enterprises, and industries, help women enhance their capacity to contribute to the economy. Women are also being trained for industrial research, consulting, policy creation, and implementation. UNESCO has projected that "improved human capital is crucial for maintaining current and sustainable levels of development, without which countries inevitably fall behind and face marginalization in their intellectual capabilities and economic isolation". Although, as a result, the current Higher Education policy has integrated interdisciplinary content and inclusive admissions criteria in equal measure, the most recent plan have a merit-based selection for women, which enables them to get in the same way as men.

5.4. Women's education training and employment in India

Career guidance and counseling present a balanced mix of modernity and tradition in India. The goal is to diminish unemployment and promote self-employment among women so that useful programs like career counseling, exhibitions, and seminars are provided to disseminate the necessary information. As a result, women are becoming self-reliant, self-assured, and they're learning how to earn an income by training. Recent options for female students have emerged in India's university system. Computational Science, Information Technology, Government, Molecular Medicine, and more detail are necessary ingredients in the recipe; In addition, courses in fashion design, nutrition, and business administration are all offered. Furthermore, these programs provide personality development and English resources as a part of their core curricula (Shetty, Sowjanya and Hans, V. Basil, 2015).

Even more, courses are now available for women who want to use their artistic talents in event management, puppet workshops, television writing, and aviation law - these innovative programs are intended to train students for competitive jobs in the workforce. In addition, Indian National Life Insurance provides women in need with three months of basic survival training.

5.5. Indian Higher Education system and Empowerment

The Indian National Policy on Education initiative states: "The education system will empower women". New values will be encouraged by redesigning curricula, textbooks, instructional materials, and managerial orientation. It aims to highlight women who are building women's facilities in Agricultural and Home Science colleges that provide continuing education and correspondence schools-ability; while also holding industry credit, building, banking, women's training facility growth, and trade diversification in mind-conducting research, organizing seminars, and hosting public media interviews and panels in mind. Providing a Women's Studies department to uniting students, disseminating women's information giving classes on women's social - empower development through media and legislation's the more relevant and responsive gender-specific approach to the teaching of content integrating women into national development. Depending on the conditions and needs of the female population, curriculum change efforts should include intensive exposure to and involvement with different forms of employment in summer jobs or internships. In addition, to master operational procedures, manual and technological orientation must be included in the preparation; in the assessment to assess how far women have progressed in applying themselves and solving problems.

5.6. Equity education

The challenge for gender equity in higher education is men and women alike. Gender-neutral education includes diversification of career paths and expanded roles for both men and women. Emancipation should not be something that happens by accident in a healthy society. Some large factors that affect gender equity include affirmative action programs, project and awareness development programs, programs and methods to deal with gender stereotyping, and efforts to place women and people from the alumnae community in administrative and non-traditional settings. The greater obstacle for women in the post secondary realm is the re-empowerment of women and the community.

5.6. Higher education in India

Towards 4.0, India's primary objective in higher education is to acquire, generate, generate, and disseminate leadership skills. It has already empowered women to be able to compete with precision and to deal with multi-tasking. Empowered women challenge males and hold powerful positions in the corporate world; Women now have a larger political and economic voice than fifty years ago. Indian women have appeared in the tech, publishing, financial, creative, and pharmaceutical markets. Women in business and administration are also well-educated. Women's instinctive approach includes the concepts of compassion and justice. Only through education can we restore our national health, in fact, and empower the women of India to put India on the growth path.

6. Conclusion

Gender studies play a significant part in helping women get out of their shells and get them to the job market where they can thrive. It means that attention must be paid to technical training and skill development to benefit from human resources. Small projects have excessive weight on the R&D investment; much importance is invested in keeping them. We must act without delay to eliminate illiteracy and cultural obstacles to understanding. To advance, they must focus, plan, and work together as a cohesive team. University administration must help to provide equal opportunities for women, equipping them with the abilities to make decisions for themselves and their communities, and extend their visibility, not only for their excellent but for the good of the country.

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3

Addressing Identity, Empowering Rights-A Study of Portrayal of Women in Indian Art Cinema

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Abstract

The present study attempts to analyze the language of camera and the magical effects it creates on screen, on the minds and brains of the audience. The likes of Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, Mrinal Sen and Aparna Sen, among directors of Indian Art Cinema, have used the language of cinema with poignancy and mastery to pass stirring interpretation on the situation of women in the society. The paper centers round the question of identity and rights of women in a male dominated society and the aesthetics of its portrayal in cinema. The paper presents an aesthetic reading of selected films in the light of Stuart Hall's representation and Laura Mulvey's male gaze. It infers that cinema, essentially a director's medium as per the Auteur Theory, has its own language which can portray the psychological planes of characters and make a strong statement against the social conventions.

Keywords: Film Language, Feminism, Representation, Portrayal

1. Introduction

The position of women in society is a political standing. It is not political in the sense of electoral politics or the relationship between the state and its people but it is an intra societal process with politics very much at the centre. The real concerns establishing, reinforcing and counter of a patriarchal system, which has come to be known as the 'order', in the society. The patriarchy tends to take shape of dominance and exploitation and any attempt to modify the order

faces resistance. The entire social system in macro units of governance and micro units of families' works to maintain the order and a stance taken in favour or against is definitely political in nature.

In case of arts, the artist, he may be an author, painter, music composer, poet, playwright, actor or a film director, concentrates on the effects of politics rather than the political process that is referred above. It is always the humane aspect that goes through the politics that interests him as political processes will change with time but it is the individual feelings that remain same, reactions are so perpetual that an artist trying to create a classic art focuses on the man, his feelings, the society and people around him and his relationship with them. It is the politics of relationship, political equation between two people or between the society and people that art centers around. It is not about party politics or electoral politics. They may come as a mere background or reference but great art always concerns with the individual, in a very micro level but its message becomes public in nature, grows up to a macro level. Picasso's *Guernica* or the Vinci's *Monalisa* are classic examples of the fact. Therefore, when it comes to Politics and Women, it will never be about the dry testimonials of extent of women's participation in party politics or women empowerment et al rather, focus on the politics of relationship of a man and woman, position of a woman in the society, reactions of woman to changes around her and in similar individualistic, humane lines.

2. Approaches to Art

Laura Mulvey pioneered the idea of male gaze in her seminal Mulvey stating that our arts, mostly created by male artists portrayed the women from an essentially male perspective where her physicality and certain moral qualities attributed by the society were central to the portrayal. Mulvey termed this tendency as the male gaze asserting that there was a necessity to also portray a woman's mind from an empathetic stand, from her own eyes, something which is quite in sync with the basic philosophy of feminism. Pointing to the situation of women in the society, Mulvey writes:

“Woman, then, stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of a woman still tied to her place as the bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning” (Mulvey, 1982: 62)

Needless to say, as great authors came up with creations which portrayed women from their view point, the likes of Tagore in *Nashtanir*, *Ghare Baire*, *Char Adhyay*, *Chokher Bali* to name a few, film directors like Ray and Ghatak

took the matter seriously as one of the important components of the modern cinema they wanted to create, a cinema which was branded as Art Cinema and Parallel Cinema for its distinct differences with the mainstream commercial cinema. It should be mentioned here that they drew their inspiration from the modernist & existential film philosophies of the Soviet, Italy and France pioneered by directors like Pudovkin, De Sica, Renoir and Truffaut. Later on, the trend was given a new dimension by female directors like Aparna Sen, Sai Paranjape, Kalpana Lajmi, Mira Nair and Deepa Mehta. Even the crassly commercial Bollywood couldn't stay away from the trend and came up with occasional gems like *Mother India*, *Umrao Jaan* and *Aandhi*.

Cinema is an extremely technical medium where creation is done with the help of several machines and technology. The Camera is a Director's biggest weapon in transcribing his thoughts to screen. The Camera has its own operating methods and outputs which may be termed as the 'Language of the camera'. Indeed it's not words or spoken language or signs but how they appear on screen when filmed through the lenses that is the biggest artistic consideration for the Director. According to Satyajit Ray:

"Those who watch films-obviously it is meant to be seen-they must have noticed that the scenes are broken up into parts and shown from different angles rather than from a single angle. These parts are called 'Shots' and this process of showing a scene part by part is exclusive to the film medium. Prior to films, no art form needed this technique. It is not just a whimsical technique, not just to add to the variety. It has an artistic objective and linguistic justification. If we select a portion from the screenplay and analyze the shots in it, the objective and justification can be explained" (Ray, 1982: 48-49).

Thus, we can see that the aesthetics of camera are hidden in its basic shots, movements and framing. Framing is a process of creating composition. A good director instead of merely pointing a camera on the subject composes a scene through judicious use of shots and moves the camera accordingly to produce the desired effect on screen.

3. Concepts

The study of Feminism or Women's Study has its own distinct academic characteristics comprising Theories, Models, Methodologies and Postulates. The present discussion is essentially about the search of cinematic tools for a director to synthesize elements of feminism onto the screen. Hence without going to the study of feminist theories the theoretical framework of the present discussion focuses primarily on two intrinsically cultural concepts, namely, *Representation* by Stuart Hall and the *Auteur Theory* of cinema.

3.1. Representation-Stuart Hall

Stuart Hall, the noted cultural theorist of the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies coins the society as a cultural group. The people living in this group are members who are acquainted with the language, signs and images and they use it to represent meanings (Hall, 1997). There are several other theories which further branch out into various other approaches of representation.

The realistic meanings of all living elements which exist in the world are reflected like a mirror in the Reflective Approach. When the meanings are imposed by the creator of a text it is known as Intentional Approach. The Constructivist Approach maintains that the realistic meanings of worldly elements or the meaning interpreted by the author does not constitute the meaning. There are sub approaches under this-the semiotic approach of Ferdinand de Saussure and discursive approach of Michael Foucault. Hall himself described the Concept Approach where we represent meanings through our mental realm or psyche from how our senses perceive the various worldly objects and the relationship between them (Hall, 1997).

In cinema, both the language in the form of dialogues and semiotics in the form of camera shots, movements, edit cuts, sounds and body composition set up a cinematic discourse or film language which communicates meaning in the way the director desires.

3.2. The Auteur-Francois Truffaut

Francois Truffaut, the noted French director-critic introduced the concept of the Auteur in his 1954 article, a certain tendency in French Cinema. Truffaut coined the term Auteur for all those good film directors who had a signature style of making films and a distinct way to interpret an issue in the backdrop of a world view. He clearly categorized that bad directors never had a signature style and even the worst films of auteur directors were better than them. The concept was further deliberated in the then intellectual film hub magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma* by critics like Andre Bazin, Roger Leedhardt and in the US by Andrew Sarris. Sarris elevated the concept of auteur into a method of analyzing the films of good directors.

Truffaut used the phrase “la politique des Auteurs” emphasizing that good directors had a certain way of looking at things and treating them cinematically which is similar to a policy which translates into establishing a unique but personal style of film making. Thematically too the films would have a consistency which would make the director’s film stand out as his film. He appreciated Jean Renoir’s humanism and Alfred Hitchcock’s visual style of film making. According to the Auteur Theory, the director is the captain of the ship who drives the film through

his world view and innovative use of technology thereby creating a unique signature style which is recognizable.

4. Analysis

The history of Bengali cinema runs parallel to that of Indian cinema and in colonial India it likewise concentrated on historical and mythological themes with rare cases of literary source. It took off in the post colonial era with the onset of neo realism and inspired directors like Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen and Ritwik Ghatak seriously thinking about the aesthetics of camera. Ray's (1954) explosion *Pather Panchali* revolutionized the use of camera in Bengali cinema. The experiments with theme and all other technical aspects continued to greater heights in subsequent films by Ray himself and notably of Sen and Ghatak.

In *Charulata*, an adaptation of Tagore's novel *Noshtonir*, the opening scene is a classic example of Ray's mastery over camera which he used aptly throughout the palatial indoors of a rich middleclass to portray the abject loneliness and solitary confinement of a young Bengali Housewife. The character, Charu, acted by Madhabi Mukherjee is trapped in a solitary confinement within the four walls of her mansion. Her husband has no time for her and all she does is a search of work and ends up doing nothing in despair. In the opening scene of *Charulata*, Ray uses a range of Pan and Follow shots coupled beautifully with Zoom ins and outs to depict the useless time spending of the lady. Her husband is lost so much in work that he cannot see her even from a handshaking distance and all Charu can do is to see him through a pair of Binoculars. After an activity filled sequence Ray terminates the scene with a sudden and fast zoom out leaving *Charulata* empty and alone amidst her material world.

Chidananda Das Gupta has rightly pointed out:

“Ray's analytical method, his ability to reveal the mental event with exactness and with few words reaches its height in *Charulata*.....The opening scene establishing Charu's loneliness is a superb example of wordless characterization.....”(Das Gupta, 2008: 80-82).



Photo 1: A scene from *Charulata* (source: Google Images)

If we prepare a shot division chart of the Opening Scene of *Charulata* we will see that Ray has presented Charu from the point of view of the house she lives in by shooting the various parts of the house and Charu somewhere in it. Charu appears to be so alone and single in the entire house. The scene is also interesting for the fact that Ray has matched ‘reel time’ with ‘real time’ as proven by the time on the big watch. At the very onset Ray establishes Charu as the lonely wife which would actually become a tagline for the film to the international audience.

Ritwik Ghatak’s *Meghe Dhaka Tara* is a remarkable tale of a young girl Nita, who in spite of having a family gets entangled into a web of personal crisis and ends up catching Tuberculosis, inevitably a leader to death in those days. In the outstanding picturisation of the Tagore song *Je Raat e Mor Duarguli*, Ghatak uses darkness as a motif of despair symbolizing the melancholy mood and uses a combination of tilt up and zoom in as the baritone of Debabarata Biswas goes, “.....*Aakash pane haath baralem kaharo tare....*”(.....I reach out to the sky for thou....). The song stops abruptly with a series of whiplashes in the background score; the camera holds Nita’s face in Extreme Close Up with a top light illuminating it. It is a classic use of semiotics by Ghatak as the face is reminiscent of a drowning Maa Durga after the Visarjan. Inevitably, it raises a question in the mind of the audience about Nita’s future, an ominous sign that something unfortunate is about to happen to her.



Photo 2: A scene from *Meghe Dhaka Tara*

In the last scene of the film where Nita's elder brother narrates the happy family life of her sister, Nita, down with disease, cries out- '*But I wanted to live Dada, I want to live, Dada, I will live....*'. Ghatak uses a series of Long shots with vociferous Pans to resonate Nita's heart piercing cry. Even during her conversation with elder brother the camera uses point of view shot, sometimes low angle, with close ups focusing on Nita's face. It is a contrasting depiction of siblings in different moods-the brother basking at the liveliness of his nephew and the sister awaiting death. Although critics perceive the scene to be melodramatic and negative, Ghatak, by depicting Nita's will to live on has ended in a powerful statement of will power of Nita. Film Scholar Sanjay Mukhopadhyay poignantly interprets:

"Undoubtedly, the film centers round the very humane Nita, described as, 'Her hallowed head & face flanked by untied locks'....the frequently used low angle camera or focus on her illuminated face we do not escape the fact that Ritwik's prime intension is to place the nightmarish darkness of partition onto a wider historic perspective" (Mukhopadhyay, 2014: 60).

Aparna Sen is a prominent Director of the generation next to Ray and Ghatak and has made her mark as a Feminist Film Director with works like *Parama* and *Sati*. In *Parama* she has used the camera effectively to portray the domestic and social isolation and exploitation of women. So much so, that dialogues are not needed, a mere observation clarifies what the position of women is. For instance, the scene where *Parama*, a middle aged house wife is cursed by her husband after her extra marital relationship is revealed. Sen deliberately places *Parama* in a corner of the frame, causing a visual disturbance and goes against

the rules of camera symmetry to show the cornered state of Parama in her own house. According to a critic, the Teleology adopted by Sen has been described as:

“In this case, the film’s aesthetics is worked out by a process of blockage. Each strand of the film moves according to a nuanced patriarchal teleology but the film’s visual and narrative interventions block the smooth passage of teleology. Sen does not rewrite, rework or redress any of these movements but begins a new narrative motif that enables the blockage of the patriarchal teleology” (Ramanathan, 2006: 23).

Towards the end of the film when Parama’s family members and a Psychiatrist come to counsel her Sen again frames them together in a way that is so reminiscent of an Interview Board having multiple members. The dialogues that follow are also like an ongoing interview where experts throw questions at random from every nook of the table to confuse the job aspirant. The film very poignantly shows a confused Parama and establishes that a sensitive matter which needs to be dealt privately is discussed in an open forum simply because it is related to a woman. In the last scene of the film as Parama declares that she will pursue a career, the camera pans right following her eyes to the budding sapling onto the window of the hospital and beyond which symbolizes a fresh lease of life and beginning of a new journey. The Pan Right here is an image construction of a new bend of life that Parama is entering.

In this context it would be relevant to quote the same critic’s thought continued from the above:

“Parama would now appear to be both aesthetically and visually coerced, and as a female, hunted.....The very visibility of the camera equipment, the centering of the target range or the exposure of the aesthetic agenda, interrupts the relay of gazes, they do not facilitate it. Visually, the film shows her objectification, it does not objectify her in an unproblematic way” (Ramanathan, 2006: 23).

While characters like Charu and Nita in films of Ray and Ghatak have been implicitly interpreted with the focus on the helplessness of their situation, Paroma proactively makes a bold statement through an intervention. The shift in photography takes from the camera getting focused on the protagonist and zooms out to her situation from focusing on the situation and zooming into the protagonist indicating that the tolerance towards exploitation and helplessness is on the decline giving way to an attitude of making a way for herself, reminiscent of the modern and independent thinking Indian woman of the new millennium. The camera transfers the spirit of the character to the audience through the cinematic language. This portrayal is a bold statement aimed towards inspiring a social change.



Photo 3: A scene from *Parama*

5. Conclusion

Examples and instances of meaningful camera work galore in the works of Ray, Ghatak and Mrinal Sen and later in the works of Aparna Sen, Buddhadev Das Gupta, Gautam Ghosh and Rituparno Ghosh to name a few. The philosophical approach that comes out from these practices is that these directors have perceived Cinema as a technical art which heavily relies on camera. The language of camera is an unique language which is recognized by these auteurs and they have pressed their capacities beyond the usual elements of Indian art like dialogues, melodrama, sounds and actions to venture into the world of expression, realism and silence. In short, they have allowed the camera to do the talking!

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4

Social Media Activism and Gender Equality: A Sociological Interrogation

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Abstract

In contemporary times, media is extensively excogitated as an effective expedient to expatiate the influence, control, and innovation in society. In nutshell, it is thoroughly contemplated as an influential instrument, which has influenced almost all domains of everyday life of individuals in society. It is also regarded as a potential means to cater solutions to everyday societal issues and problems; the global issue of gender inequality is not an exception. The media especially social media plays a pivotal role in achieving ‘gender equality, which is considered as one of the pertinent goals of global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, the article finds its relevance. The article attempts to critically unearth the role of social media activism in demonstrating the global agenda of gender equality and justice. While doing so, the author has systematically contextualized and analyzed the me too movement (MTM), which is globally considered as an effective medium to fight against sexual harassment and assault in the public sphere.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Me Too, New Social Movement, Social Media

1. Introduction

The emergence as well as escalating expansion of social media epitomizes as a trailblazer, particularly in exteriorizing online activism in skirmishing various forms and magnitudes of women’s woebegone; sexual harassment as well as assault especially at the workplace is not an exception. As a matter of fact, due to the wide use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), in contemporary times, social media is largely influencing the day-to-day lives of

individuals and communities across the globe (Gaile, 2013). More precisely, the rise of digital networked technologies including social media has, to a considerable extent, resulted in the convergence of distribution channels and communication patterns in society (Cammaerts, 2015). That apart, these technologies are changing the structure of action and interaction among the individuals in society. It is rightly claimed that the profound influence of networked technologies has impacted the social, political, economic, cultural, and nonetheless the judicial landscapes of human society. It is undoubtedly claimed that because of the widespread development and gradual usage of social media, contemporary society has been rightly considered as a 'network society' or 'digital society' or 'cyber society' or 'information society' or more aptly 'online society'. Because of the instantaneous spurring of online spaces or social media, we have been witnessing multifarious metamorphic transformations in the spheres of offline spaces of individuals and institutions in society (Mishra, 2019).

The internet or more specifically social media is becoming increasingly important in organizing social movements and motivating individuals, groups, and communities across the globe. The potential role of social media is fundamentally altering the structure of power relations in society as well as providing an online opportunity for the weaker or disadvantaged sections of society to self-represent, communicate independently, and organize transnational against long-standing injustices and harassments. Moreover, social media also plays a pertinent role in organizing several categories of society to fight against sexual harassment and assault; the category of gender is not an exception. Social media facilitates an appropriate platform to expose systematically the processes and practices of marginalization especially among the weaker sections of the society (for example, women) since these sections of individuals have been failed or neglected in getting the fruits of development and have been persistently becoming the objects of discrimination, deprivation, destitution and nonetheless the delusion. As the literature suggests, social media has demonstrated its power to raise awareness and accountability for women's rights while also fighting against discriminations and stereotypes (Loiseau and Nowacka, 2015; Bostanci, 2019). In this context, the tone and tempo of the current paper seeks to emphasize the role of social media activism in demonstrating the global agenda of gender equality and justice. The present paper is divided into four major sections. The first section is based on a brief overview of social media. The second section provides the function of social media in facilitating social movements or more appropriately online activism. The third section reflects on social media and gender activism. It critically reflects on the case of the Me Too Movement (MTM). The fourth and final section concludes the paper with certain concluding remarks.

2. Social Media Activism: A Sociological Turn

Social media has become an essential part of life among individuals across the globe. In contemporary times, life without social media is quite unthinkable. It is an indispensable aspect of individuals' daily life. Living with social media has become a way of life (Janson et al., 2013; Couldry, 2015). Before we proceed further on social media, it is very important to know about media. Media commonly visualizes as a potential means of influence, control, and innovation in society. Social media, one of the dominant forms of media constitutes a significant aspect of media. Social media can be more regarded as a sociological construct than an ICT-related apparatus. Social media (the online-based platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Google+) is increasingly very pervasive across the globe (Baruah, 2012). This has been exemplified by innumerable individuals as well as institutions because of its manifold usages.

In contemporary times, most people use social media with or without knowing the exact meaning of social media. As an online-based communication, there is no unified definition of social media. Therefore, it is pertinent on the part of the reader to know the appropriate meaning of the term social media. Social media, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, refers to the varieties of electronic communication (such as social networking websites and micro blogging) in which people create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other contents (such as videos) (cited in Edosomwan et al., 2011). Thus, the platforms that enables the interactive web by allowing users to engage in comment on and generate content as a means of connecting with their social circle, other users, and the general public are known as social media. Social media is the online technology and practices that people use to share content, opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives. These are primarily online media for social interaction.

It is widely acknowledged that social media exposes and expedites individuals' "identity expression, exploration and experimentation" (Gunduz, 2017). Social media exonerates multiple functions (Manning, 2014). First, social media allows people to work on their identities. Individuals will evaluate themselves in a new light when they witness reactions to their online social presence, and they will note that online engagement allows them to feel more open about their thoughts, ideas, and queries - for better or worse. Second, social media allows people to take alternative approaches to their interactions. Even while public discourse frequently portrays social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter as selfish and superficial, research demonstrates that these platforms, to a large extent, enable people who might not otherwise be able to communicate to do so. People often envision that computer-mediated communication platforms have helped them meet some of their closest friends and even spouses. Third, social media

enables people to carry out work-related tasks. When a prominent blog or someone with a huge social network circle is paid to advertise an event, social media undertakes that act free of cost. Other times, people communicate with co-workers via social networking sites or, more commonly, email, and handle the majority of their professional contact through the social media platforms. Fourth, users can use social media to find information or share ideas. This information can cover a wide range of topics, including political campaigns, local issues, gender issues, disasters, and so on. Fifth, often in line with information sharing, people can use social media to express their thoughts or examine the ideas of others. Sixth and finally, such sites can provide enjoyment to users.

Over the last two decades, social media has evolved from a comprehensive but unique form of communication to an increasingly common way of contact, organizing, obtaining information, and trading. However, as social media has evolved to become a multibillion-dollar industry and become a popular term in our everyday usage, determining the breadth and character of social media activity has become more complex. It is being used as a dominant weapon for fighting against several forms of sexual harassments and inequalities. In fact, in modern times, social media is being used as an instrument for several forms of protest movements, a platform for portraying identities of the activities, and a resource for seeking social support (Freelon et al., 2016; Tinati et al., 2014; Murthy, 2012; Jordan and Taylor, 2004). To substantiate the utilitarian character of social media, the current paper critically examines the role of social media activism in exterminating gender inequality. The paper critically analyzes the me too movement (MTM), one of the forms of media activism in extinguishing women's harassment and assault in particular and in spearheading gender equality and justice in general.

3. Social Media Activism and the Category of Gender

The encyclopaedic role of social media in today's digital activism and social movement cannot be overstated. Indeed, social media has played a pioneering role in the digitalization of human behaviour. Online platforms have altered how new generations of activists communicate with their peers and communities, as well as how they participate in resistance activities. Social media is changing the way we form relationships and learn, and it is also changing the way activists approach their work. Social media has an advantageous role in streamlining activism efforts by activists. When more than half of internet users also use social media sites (Duggan and Brenner, 2013), social media provides the opportunity to communicate with large groups of people virtually instantly. Indeed, social media platforms like Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook, and Instagram are providing new ways for activists to participate. Using social media platforms

such as Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook, and Instagram, internet/online users engaged in social concerns have started rethinking activism and leadership roles especially in different forms of new social movements. As a result, social media has redefined how people communicate. There is also an expectation that it will create spaces for those whose voices are heard and magnify a greater number of those whose voices have been disregarded; this includes the voices of marginalized groups in general and women in particular. According to Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia (2014), social movements that use social media go through four stages: (i) triggering event, (ii) media response, (iii) viral organization, and (iv) physical response. A triggering event is a one-of-a-kind occurrence that causes a societal reaction. The event disrupts society's status quo, is self-contained, and citizens rally around it. Both new and conventional media outlets covering the event employ a variety of technology to broadcast information around the world. This widespread publicity attracts the attention of a group of people who share the same interest, resulting in the formation of a viral organization. This viral organization builds a sense of community by sending out constant messages that go from online to offline, resulting in a tangible response. Placing this movement in the actual world demonstrates its strength and power, and may urge others to promote and replicate it in other areas (Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia, 2014).

It is widely proclaimed that social media activates various forms of new social movements at multiple levels. A social movement is a social process in which a group of people expresses their views, airs grievances and criticisms, and proposes solutions to issues through a range of collective acts. These movements share three characteristics: conflictual with clearly defined identified opponents, structured through extensive informal networks, and focused on building, maintaining, and sharing collective identities (Della Porta and Diani, 2006). The rise of digital networked technologies has resulted in a convergence of distribution channels and communication formats, including social media. Some argue that we have entered a new era of information, network, or knowledge society as a result of the tremendous economic, social, and political influence of networked technologies. It has played a pivotal role in the rise and spread of various forms of new social movements. The research on activists and protest movements' use of networked technologies is situated in the "intersection of social context, political goal, and technological possibility" (Gillan et al., 2008). It is widely acknowledged that social media has revolutionized the landscape of information globally and has also facilitated the relationship that exists between citizens and state on the one hand and among the citizens in the state on the other. Social media in the form of online platforms has transfigured the processes and practices of new social movements undertaken by activists on various aspects

of society; the category of women and their experienced experiences of harassment and assault is not an exception (Swank and Fahs, 2017).

Women now account for their narratives and reclaim certain bargaining and journalistic power on their own due to the gradual rise of social media. Furthermore, social media provides an open public space for female activists to candidly raise their voices against injustice and to draw attention to planned activities (Gheyntchi and Moghadam, 2014). It is also widely acknowledged that social media has made it easier for feminist activists to connect both within and across borders. Social media activism, particularly has tag activism, has aided in raising public awareness of women's injustices and enhancing the exposure of issues that are under-reported in the mainstream media. Female victims of abuse have been able to communicate their experiences of violence on social media platforms, allowing them to share knowledge and information about their rights, legal processes, and welfare services with other female victims. Apart from that, women's grassroots organizations have been increasingly using social media to demand greater public responsibility in the area of gender equality and justice. Following the gang rape of a young woman in Delhi in 2012, the #DelhiGangRape hashtag campaign has raised attention to the scale of gender-based violence in India. The hashtag movement has invigorated public mobilization, which has also enforced the government to enact anti-rape legislation.

In this context, social media, as discussed above, is considered as an appurtenant instrument to voice the voiceless as well as their ramifications. One such classic example could be the worldwide 'me too movement' (MTM). The remaining sections engage in unearthing the conceptual, causal, and consequential nuances relating to the MTM. The subsequent sections critically unearth the role of social media activism in the form of MTM against sexual harassments and assaults with the grand objective of attaining gender equality and justice.

4. Social Media Activism: Interrogating Me Too Movement

The MeToo movement (MTM) is precisely considered as a kind of new social movement. The MTM has emerged in response to the rise of intercontinental sexual harassments and abuses faced by sexually assaulted and harassed women worldwide which have received unprecedented attention worldwide. The MTM is broadly a movement against sexual harassment and assault or more appropriately sexual misconduct. The MTM is strongly tied to the global resurrection of the feminist movement as a significant movement. In October 2017, the MTM went viral on social media, revealing the prevalence and scope of sexual harassment and assault issues, particularly in the workplace. This movement has sparked a broad debate about how to address issues of sexual

harassment and abuse in the workplace. In today's society, sexism and sexual harassment are addressed by the MTM. Women have begun to share their tales of shame, embarrassment, anger, fear, and injury, as well as how men have treated them. The modern MTM is intriguing for at least three reasons: (i) it is going viral in the public sphere; (ii) it provides a space where the victims share their stories and gain wide mass support; and (iii) it publicizes the perverse acts of the perpetrators.

The MTM was initially initiated in 2006 to assist survivors of sexual abuse, primarily black women and girls, as well as other young women of colour from low-income neighbourhoods, in finding ways to heal. Tarana Burke founded the MTM as an innovative and creative movement to aid victims of sexual violence and abuse (Jain, 2020). However, it became well-known in the year 2017. Tarana Burke, a civil rights activist and community organizer in the United States, coined the phrase "Me Too" in 2006, and American actress Alyssa Milano popularised it on Twitter in 2017. Alyssa Milano, an actress, took to Twitter to urge all women who have been sexually harassed or assaulted to update their status to "Me Too" to help people understand the scope of the issue. Since then, the "Me Too" hashtag has gone global, apparently being shared or commented on millions of times on social media accounts throughout the world. Women who have come forward to report sexual harassment charges have been dubbed "silence breakers", and Time Magazine has crowned them "2017 Person of the Year". Milano and Michael Baker urged victims of sexual harassment to tweet about it to raise awareness of the issue. With over half a million tweets and a considerable amount of shares on Facebook, the MTM has become one of the most popular trending topics on Twitter. The initiative has gone viral, with superstars like Lady Gaga, Patricia Arquette, and Debra Messing joining millions of ordinary women. Numerous women have come out on social media to identify themselves as victims of sexual assault after hearing the two simple words me too.

As mentioned above, initiated by Tarana Burke in 2006 and rejuvenated by Alyssa Milano in 2017, several women especially assaulted women have started sharing their sexual harassment and assault experiences worldwide. As the literature suggests, Alyssa Milano initially tweeted the hashtag on October 15, 2017, against the predatory behaviour of Harvey Weinstein, a frontline Hollywood producer (Khomami, 2017). Following Milano's initial post, women's accounts of sexual harassment and assault flooded in social media. Since that time the MTM went popular on social media. Her message urged women who have been sexually harassed to share their stories on social media using the hashtag "#MeToo" to show how widespread sexual harassment is. Since then "#MeToo" has been retweeted numerous times across the globe. Millions and

millions of women throughout the world shared their own stories of workplace rape, assault, and harassment shortly after the movement began in the United States. The MTM is not just an urban phenomenon but a very realistic and widespread movement that has spread across all corners of the globe. A glance at pages of the internet provides enough voices on MTM worldwide. The MTM has quickly spread over the world. Within hours of actress Alyssa Milano's tweet encouraging women to relate their tales, the hashtag had been translated into many different languages. The hashtag is presently popular in several nations. The majority of the hashtags are just translations of the phrase "me too" with few notable exceptions.

The MTM has sparked an increase in global awareness of sexual violence and assault. This is not only a watershed event in history; it is also a watershed moment in internet or online or social media history. The MTM comes at a time when sexual assault survivors throughout the world are using the internet to make their voices and viewpoints heard and recognized. The MTM has generated a great deal of debate across the world. In fact, as a global movement, the MTM has emerged as a powerful whistleblower that has been hitting from person (individual) to parliament (institution), from academics to amusement, from judge to journalist, from singer to sports so on and so forth. The MTM is also very popular in India. Following actor Tanushree Dutta's charges against co-star Nana Patekar, one of Bollywood's finest actors in India, the MTM has gained a foothold in India (Roy, 2019). Dutta's outspokenness about her encounter with Patekar on the set of "Horn OK Please" sparked a societal awakening in India, with several important figures in India's media and entertainment sectors being exposed as sexual predators and abusers as a result. As claims of sexual misconduct continue to surface, numerous well-known comedians, journalists, and actors, and celebrities have been named and ashamed on social media. Several high-profile Indian celebrities like Vikas Bahl, Alok Nath, Kailash Kher, Rajat Kapoor, Sajid Khan, Subhash Ghai, Anu Malik, and others have been accused of sexual harassment and assault. With each passing day, fresh names with charges of sexual harassment come out, and the demand for justice has grown in popularity among the general public. In addition, the national government has planned to appoint a legal commission to investigate the problem.

As mentioned, the MTM is a movement against sexual harassment and assault. The MTM has become a worldwide phenomenon. It is gradually entering into every sphere of human society. Though the phenomenon is quite prominent in the media and entertainment industry, it is gradually entering into academics, polity, etc. This campaign has gained great popularity within just a few days and it is truly a great starting point for addressing all kinds of situations where

women are harassed or assaulted. Critics have their respective arguments regarding the reason and rationality of the mushrooming of the movement. While going through the series of stories and news clippings in newspapers and magazines, the author, whatever the reason and rationality may be, has mentioned the following reasons and rationality about the origin and gradual expansion of the MTM.

At the outset, the MTM is rightly considered an agent of change. As an agent of change, the MTM is providing a hassle-free or obstacle-free space to the harassed to voice against the harasser. The large number of women who have come forward to name their harassers is a sign that India is making progress toward providing a safe atmosphere for survivors. However, the 'battle' has only just begun. The first step is to report cases of sexual violence, but the remainder of the route to justice is fraught with difficulties for survivors. Second, the MTM is rightly considered as a new social movement. Social movements are well-intentioned and well-organized groups working toward a shared goal. These movements are broadly organized to bring about change, resist change, or provide a political voice to those who are otherwise unrepresented in politics. Social movements are the catalysts for social change. The conventional social movement has been overshadowed by the new social movement. Social movements that arose from disputes in post-industrial revolution society and economy are known as new social movements, which first appeared in the 1950s. The conventional social movement of the proletarian revolution has been superseded by a connected array of collective actions known as new social movements (Buechler, 1993). According to new social movement theory, antiwar, environmental, civil rights, and feminist movements are distinct from traditional social movements such as labour movements (Vilke, 2021). Traditional social movements are primarily concerned with class conflict, but contemporary social movements are concerned with political and social issues. The dominant objective of MTM is to stamp out sexual harassment and assault by emboldening the survivors to break the silence and share their stories. The movement is frequently mentioned in the press, and it has received both positive and negative publicity. Many different forms of debates regarding sexual harassment and assault have taken place online since the MTM became popular. This is an exciting movement because women are (re)defining what harassment, violence, and assault mean for them. Third, the MTM is rightly regarded as a gateway for survivors. Although Indian feminists have argued that the MTM is ineffective in combating sexual harassment and assault, it has at least provided a platform for survivors to speak up, which has eventually resulted in an uptick in reporting on workplace sexual harassment and misbehaviour. For survivors of rape, sexual assault, and harassment, the MTM is therapeutic because it finally allows them the chance

they have been longing for to confront the injustice they have been fighting inwardly and, most importantly, to be heard and achieve justice. Fourth, the MTM promotes the internet or online activism. The strength of MTM, on the other hand, is that it transforms something that women have long been silent about. For a prolonged period, the majority of women have thought of sexual harassment and assault as something that happens behind closed doors, in private, and that they feel ashamed of admitting that. Unlike many other types of social media activism, it is not a call to action or the start of a campaign that culminates in a series of demonstrations, speeches, and events. It is just an attempt to augment online activism against sexual harassment and assaults in today's society and to expose the sexually sick-minded individuals indulging in heinous acts. Social media proffers women's freedom of speech, which they didn't have before. Social media allows them to share publicly what exactly is going on and the situation in which they live. As we know, the power of social media is very strong; as a result, women's stories are not being distorted. Online campaigns, like the MTM, reach out to both young and old people from all around the world. It helps them learn more about all the issues that lie underneath all the sexual harassment stories in India like the continuous gender inequality and daily occurrences of sexual violence. Fifth, the MTM acts as a pressure group to 'sluggish judiciary'. Unfortunately, India is one of the few countries where crimes against women are on the rise. Indeed, the status and position of women in India have been a contentious topic for years and decades, often reflecting a contradictory and paradoxical category in Indian culture. That apart, as a matter of fact, the violence against women in general and harassment, in particular, is poorly reported, trailed, and judged in the Indian judicial system. The survivor has to wait a long time to get her justice. In several situations, it has been widely observed that the survivors used to end their life due to a lack of confidence in the judicial system. They do not get justice even after death. The typical dialogue that we all used to hear from judicial system is that 'law will take its course of action'. Certain times, the decisions are delayed, denied, and dismissed. However, the emergence and gradual upsurge of the MTM has created an alternative avenue to report the harassment on the internet without any fear since the survivor finds comfortably her fellow survivors. While observing the MTM, the Academy Award-winning music composer, A. R. Rahman in his Twitter strongly feels that social media offers great freedom for the victims to speak up. With the resignation of parliamentarian(s), actors, music composers, etc. from their respective designated positions and assignments, the anti-sexual harassment, and abuse movement's rallying cry is becoming increasingly visible on the pages of the internet. It provides an alternative avenue for increasing reporting of harassment. It also offers a fearless forum for

reporting harassment. The MTM, no doubt, prompts the investigation procedure since the issue draws wider attention from several levels. Therefore, it is rightly argued that the MTM is certainly considered as a pressure group, especially for the delayed or sluggish judiciary system. Sixth, the MTM also acts as an innovative model of protest against harassment. Millennial Indian Women launched a fundamentally new sort of feminist politics in the early twenty-first century that had never been witnessed before. They have started a series of social media campaigns against the culture of sexual violence, inspired by a lexicon of rights and techniques of protest used by young women all around the world. In fact, throughout the years, there have been many campaigns and movements which have helped shed some light on the current situation faced by Indian women. The objective is that the more popular this movement gains, the more women it can reach and help. These internet campaigns have reflected a growing sense of dissatisfaction especially among young patriarchal individuals in a society where gender inequity and sexual violence persist despite decades of feminist struggle (Kurian, 2018). Seventh, the MTM provides a voice to the voiceless. Even though this movement is considered new to the world, it has truly helped women rid themselves of the shame and fear that a sexual assault brings. India is one of the countries where sexual assault episodes happen frequently and sadly, many women are not in a position to stand up for themselves. The MTM campaign can help shed some light on situations where women don't have the upper hand. A new era for feminism has been marked in India and women can only hope to see better days. As long as we have each others' support, we will be able to fight against anything. The MTM campaign has helped women from all around the world in throwing light on sexual misconduct. Not only that, it has also given women the opportunity to support each other, to empower themselves, and to have a chance to talk about a serious issue that usually remains in the dark.

5. Social Media Activism and MTM: Consequences and Concerns

As a widespread phenomenon, the MTM is very active in almost all countries. The MTM is also influencing several individuals as well as institutions and their course of actions. The current section makes a critical attempt in explaining certain consequences of the MTM. First, it facilitates change in one's status quo. It is seen that the MTM has severely stirred several high-profile individuals; the case of MJ Akbar is a case in point. MJ Akbar, the then Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India, was forced to resign in 2018 when prominent journalist Priya Ramani inculpated him of sexual harassment and assault (India Today, 2018). In another situation, Anu Malik, one of the frontline music directors of Bollywood had to resign from the 'Indian Idol-10' season, one of the leading reality shows of India. These cases are symptomatic. Apart

from the change in the status quo of the harasser, one can also find a change of status and position of the survivor of sexual harassment or abuse. Second, the MTM also facilitates change in the way of interaction. The MTM also brings a great change in the sphere of interaction among individuals. The movement certainly brings to an end the loose interactions that happen among individuals, especially in work sphere. The MTM certainly enforces a formal interaction among the individuals in the public sphere. It will certainly influence the upcoming dating culture since there is the possibility of future fear of harassments and assaults. The individual has to be very respectful to one's co-workers. Third, the MTM facilitates change in the behaviour towards women. The immediate impact of the MTM is to witness a change in the behaviour towards the female counterparts in any situation. It minimizes the ill-intended interaction with women in society. The individuals will be very careful about not only their behaviour but also the activities that they do around others. The men will be very careful about telling unnecessary off-colour jokes when the women are present. That apart, it will also check the men's opinion about the clothes, dress, shoes, hairstyle so on and so forth of women. The man now must act like a gentleman. It undoubtedly increases the bargaining power among women in society. Fourth, the MTM facilitates change in the workplace culture. It severely impacts the work culture of many organizations; government offices, non-government organizations, and corporate houses are no exception. It certainly brings three important changes in one's own work culture. First, the movement fosters a culture of transparency and accountability. Transparency and accountability not only aid in the development of meaningful corporate culture but also serve to boost an institution's brand image. Second, it provides a clean house i.e. harassment-free atmosphere. While transparency is important, ridding the workplace of sexual aggressors - regardless of their level - sends a strong message to employees and the entire public. It demonstrates that sexual misconduct and the abuse of power for personal gain will not be tolerated in the workplace. Third, the movement also promotes professional behaviour among the workers. One of the greatest impacts of this movement is the gradual development of professional behaviour among the employees of any organization. Thus, the movement, to a large extent, brings organizational reform. Fifth, the MTM facilitates change in the regulative system of society. The MTM impinges on the regulative system of society. It will have a great impact on the judicial system of any country. Because of the mushrooming pressure of social media, the judicial system of any country has to bring about certain reforms about the structure of procedure as well as punishment to the harassers. Owing to the increasing instances of the MTM in India, Maneka Gandhi, the then Minister for Women and Child Development, Government of India strongly suggested that the government would form a committee comprising a panel of

judges to proffer advice relating to cases of sexual harassment and assault. Thus, the MTM makes an online influence on the legal systems to bring about certain reforms within the existing regulative structure of the society while dealing with sexual harassment and assault. It is often presumed that the structure of patriarchy plays a contributing role towards the all-around harassment of women not only in India but also in all developing and underdeveloped countries. That apart, the structure of patriarchy also influences other institutional structures – social, political, cultural, economic, and so on – in these countries; the institution of judiciary is not an exception. Judiciary often stands for providing justice and offering appropriate punishment to the culprits. However, in a patriarchal society, the structure of patriarchy largely influences the judiciary. As a result, the harassed individuals especially the women are often neglected in getting appropriate justice in time whenever they approach the judiciary. However, the contemporary upsurge of MTM has considerably provided an alternative space in providing gradual justice to the sexually harassed or assaulted individuals especially women. It acts as an innovative initiative in initiating an online campaign or a cyber-activism against harassment through the appropriate hashtag ‘#MeToo’. The hashtag helps in relating other harassed individuals across the web.

But, if you start seriously assuming its course of action and reaction, we will be forced to rethink the very mission of the MTM. A careful introspection of everyday MTM happenings reveals more doubts than confirmations. One notices that the operation of the MTM and its series of victims and the process of victimization are replete with ambivalence, contradictions, and ambiguities. Thus, the following informative discussion can help us in understanding the MTM in a better way. It can be reasonably argued that the MTM has had a tremendous impact on the global agenda of gender equality without a question. Is it, however, enough? It is a wonderful moment to think about this topic now. The hashtag was created in response to the MTM’s lack of attention to race. According to Sophia Nelson, the Me Too hashtag is intended to “share horror stories about race, stereotypes, and racial discrimination in the workplace” (Chiu, 2018). It elucidates a few of the MTM’s flaws. To achieve true equality between men and women from all walks of life, we must go even further. According to Chiu (2018), there are three reasons behind this. To begin with, the MTM has primarily covered female celebrities in its news coverage. What about the ladies who are not the centre of attention? What about guys who are subjected to sexual harassment and assault as well? What about individuals who have been silenced as a result of their violent experiences? The MTM is intended to serve as a wake-up call. It is past time to consider if we are truly as inclusive as we claim to be and whether we are elevating certain perspectives over others. Second,

millions, if not hundreds of thousands, of people have tweeted with the hashtag Me Too. However, this figure pales in comparison to the 4.4 billion people who do not have internet access, and there is a gender gap; women use the internet at a rate of only twelve percent, which is far lower than men. Sexual harassments and assaults are common occurrences for many people, but they disproportionately affect certain groups. Many of them are unable to take part in internet conversations. Any online or social media-based social movement that wants to have a meaningful global impact must deal with the whole issue of the digital gender divide. Finally, social media can be used to raise awareness, but what happens after that? Social media, without a doubt, is a powerful tool for reporting incidences of sexual harassment and abuse. But it is very crucial to see what occurs after that. Victims will be further victimized in the hands of victimizers unless immediate follow-up activities are taken.

The MTM is, no doubt, becoming one of the most effective anti-sexual harassment campaigns. It demonstrates that India is making progress toward fostering an atmosphere in which survivors can be guaranteed of receiving justice for the harassment and attacks to which they have been subjected. Even though the MTM has not yet featured many male victims of sexual abuse, it is reasonable to envision a large scale of such abuses, attempting not to desensitize its significance simply because no record exists. Sexual assault is a paradigm of oppression that necessitates far more than the brevity of the text. Having said that, there are a variety of approaches that can be used to overcome any obstacles and ensure that such survivors receive the justice they deserve. For many survivors, simply being heard, listened to, and believed can be empowering, and it may be all they need. The MTM indeed aims at zero sexual harassment and misconduct. But, the query that haunts one's consciousness is quite flummoxing. Does it intend to enable every innocent and harassed individual to use it for punishing the harasser leading to get the final justice? If the answer is in the affirmative, it is very difficult to remain insouciant to the following suggestive actions:

- The operation of the MTM must be simultaneously accompanied by awareness. Thus, systematic awareness campaigns must be conducted across the country to sensitize and educate people about the existence, objective, and vitality of the MTM. Series of awareness campaigns against harassment and misconduct must be arranged at different levels. Government (both national and state) agencies and civil society-based organizations must be assigned to perform this task of the awareness campaign.
- Sensitization and training programmes should be conducted for the officials (government, non-government and corporate). They should not treat

the co-workers especially the female co-workers as the object of harassment. Rather, they should understand that the functioning of the office or work sphere depends on the mutual existence of all the workers. Therefore, they should exhibit friendly professional behaviour with other fellow workers. From time to time the office should organize workshops regarding the nature of professional behaviour and the penalty for the defaulters. There should also be the provision for positional degradation as well as financial penalty for disrespecting the co-workers especially the women co-workers.

- Stringent provision of punishment for predators should be followed. The ultimate goal of the judiciary is to provide justice to the victim and to punish the predator. However, in course of punishing the predator, the practice of over-bureaucratic/judicial procedures as well as the typical extension of time, which is popularly known as ‘extension of dates’ should be exterminated failing which the victim will be penalized several times before we fix one-time punishment to the predator. In other words, simple and hassle-free procedures have to be maintained for the victims to get instant justice. Thus, victim-friendly judicial systems should be developed. Besides these, stringent categories of punishments should be defined and codified for the different categories of predators as well as levels of harassment.
- There is also the necessity of strengthening and restructuring different anti-harassment agencies or cells namely anti-harassment cell, gender, and committee against sexual harassment, internal complaints committee, etc. These cells are functioning to exterminate sexual harassment at the institutional/organizational levels. However, in most cases, these agencies are either non-functional or these are functioning under the direct influence of the head of the institutions. As a result, the prayer of the sufferer for justice and the provision of punishment for the predator solely depend on the whim and desire of the head of the institution. Thus, the vigour and vitality of these cells at institutional levels to provide a harassment-free environment is in question. Therefore, all-inclusive and vibrating cells against harassment should be re-structured at the institutional levels to provide immediate punishment to the predators. That apart, these cells should (re)organize from time to time several workshops and sensitization programmes for their officials as well as for different stakeholders on sexual harassment and their corresponding punishment systems.
- It is widely observed that digital culture has been entering into almost all domains of human existence; the domain of the work sphere of the insti-

tutions/organizations is not an exception. In fact, in the era of the digital revolution, it is quite easy to make the work sphere under digital surveillance. To put it in simple terms, the entire work sphere should be covered with CCTV surveillance. This CCTV coverage should cover from top to bottom.

6. Conclusion

Thus, the current paper has systematically sketched the role of social media activism in facilitating the global cause of gender equality and justice. It is extensively claimed that the escalating spread of social media is largely influencing the day-to-day lives of individuals across the globe. More specifically, social media as a product of digital development has smoothed the patterns of communication among individuals in society. That apart, these technologies are also changing the structure of action and interaction among the individuals in the society; the category of woman is not an exception. These technologies have helped in revolutionizing women's voices across the globe without any financial cost. The contemporary MTM is a case in point, which has been systematically analyzed in the paper. The MTM has not only shown social media activism against sexual harassment and assault among women but has also acted as online judicial activism in checking and controlling the illegal and unethical sexual behaviour of the culprits or predators. However, the intensity of social media activism in invigorating gender equality and justice is being limited because of certain pressing institutional and infrastructural limitations. Thus, these limiting factors need to be overthrown, which can be effectively materialized with the gradual entry of women in public space or public sphere as well as their concomitant command over social media. This can be achieved by providing appropriate institutional and infrastructural support whereby women can comfortably report their experiences of sexual harassment and assault and can participate in the process of trial, argument, and hearing of their complaints. That apart, there is also the urgent need for provision of internet connectivity as well as infrastructural improvement including the provision of internet gadgets, such as mobiles and laptops, which will facilitate women to access social media in materializing their cause for gender equality and justice.

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5

Covid-19 Induced Displacement and Vulnerability of Migrant Labourers of Odisha, India: A Gender Analysis

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Abstract

Covid-19 has become an issue of concern for the whole world. Today, all countries are facing the same crisis, and none will prevail over COVID-19 by acting alone. Given that we share the same future, all of us must work to ensure that it is built on solidarity and partnership. Although the pandemic-affected people are surviving through various means, the number of people suffering from COVID-19 is elevating daily and it has started affecting various aspects of people's lives including income, livelihood, health, education, relationships, etc. It created an unpredictable situation that no one could have ever imagined. With this, displacement and migration has been a big problem in human settlement. Migration of youth mass has increased in huge numbers for getting better opportunities in education and high income. Simultaneously a large number of migrants are found in unskilled labour sectors. They migrated to different work sites within and outside state borders and country borders. The present paper is going to focus on Covid-19 induced migration.

Keywords: Covid-19, pandemic, migration, quarantine, livelihood

1. Introduction

Covid-19 is an emerging current issue that has destroyed the lifestyle and economic status of every country in the world. For the first time, a new type of flue was found in Wuhan, China and this disease killed many people in 2019. It was immediately reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO) in

December 2019. After considering the devastating impact of this virus WHO named it COVID-19. Gradually it started spreading over almost fifty percent of the world's nations and affected people from various aspects including income, livelihood, health, education, relationships, etc. It created an unpredictable situation that no one could have imagined ever. There was a panic-type condition for all those countries affected by Covid-19. The coronavirus becomes the agenda everywhere: political discussions, educational forums, academic gatherings, and most importantly all of these become virtual. New lifestyle started, every day we came across news on several corona affected deaths, corona positive cases, people losing jobs due to fear of coronavirus. The closing of shopping malls, educational institutions, theatres, restaurants gave rise to an imbalanced and disturbed lifestyle. In this connection, the present paper is going to discuss the 'how' and 'why of migrant labourers' moving to home internally in India due to the pandemic with a special focus on the Odisha situation. 'Why migrant workers are so desperate to get home?' 'How are they moving?' 'What are the real-life situations?'

Migration is moving from one place to another for a certain reason. As noted earlier, people usually migrate to searching for a better livelihood; of course, the trend of migration has been changed in the last two decades. Migration of youth mass has increased in huge numbers for getting better opportunities in education and high income. Simultaneously a large number of migrants are found in unskilled labour sectors. They migrate to different work sites within and outside state borders and country borders. In the present covid-19 situation the state of Odisha is having crowded quarantine centres found in all districts¹.

2. Odisha's Scenario

Due to the unfortunate situation of COVID-19, people from every corner of the world are suffering. All nations are trying to deal with the unwanted death of their citizens in a very systematic manner. People are locked within the four walls of their own homes as per the decision of the government to impose nationwide strict 'lockdowns'. Some people are jobless and some are working from home with dissatisfaction. The financial crisis has affected the country as well as the state economy a lot. The question of 'better livelihood' has no alternative reply except staying at home. Safety is far more important than money in the present situation.

¹The present paper is based on an analysis of data captured from print media and online stories and news on covid-19 and the status of migrant workers in the state from a gender perspective

In the context of Odisha, the situation is the same and as per the aim of this paper, the status of daily wage labourers is to be analyzed from secondary sources, data, and statistics.

In the beginning, the State government's focus on strengthening the health care infrastructure to cope with the emerging public health crisis was working like a miracle. But with time, the scenario changed and its responsibilities multiplied due to frequent lockdown and shut down situations. It becomes worse with the rise of returning migrants from neighbouring states and abroad. Meanwhile, this has increased corona positive cases in the state at a high rate.

As all districts in Odisha have been struggling to deal with the coronavirus, the risk increased due to the movement of migrant workers. Migrant workers from the district are not as keen as others to come back even though the western State is a hotbed of COVID-19. Sources said, more and more migrants are having second thoughts about return as the lockdown relaxation and opening of workplaces has once again provided them jobs and livelihood. The thought of having to undergo a 28-days quarantine on return to Odisha is also a dampener for them (NIE,2020).

The outpouring of COVID-19 positive cases in Odisha since April 2020 continued to increase without any stop mark and become a hurdle for a normal life, education, and economic development. The largest single-day return migration pushed the state towards the list of corona hotspots (HT, 2020).

Some people are telling about their 'challenging journey' to reach home in the COVID-19 lockdown situation. Workers from Ongole, Andhra Pradesh adopted various ways to return home. It took 26 days to reach his village in Balasore on a bicycle (A labourer told the media person) and many others. As per the news report, there could be more than 50 Odias that they came across in the Rajahmundry quarantine centre. Many were on bicycles and a good number of people had started walking back home without any fear. There were women, girls, and children with them, still, the fear of covering a 1000 km long distance could not deter them from undertaking such a challenging journey. Another group of people from Kurnoolget was captured in Rajahmundry and sent to quarantine in April 2020. As per the media estimate, there could be around 3,000 Odias engaged in different granite factories near Ongole. Closing factories and neglected the workers were the worst effects of the coronavirus, no one can forget especially those poor people, who lost their livelihood and income source.

After leaving Rajahmundry, the migrant workers returning from the southern side, split into smaller groups to avoid the risk of facing quarantine again. There was a fear among migrants for security and safety of their life while returning

to their home state. Nobody extended a helping hand to these migrant, nobody even cared to ask anyone of them if they were thirsty or tired. It seemed to be a movie story and people were killed by the virus-like animals every day. No class, caste, education, economic status, only death was there.

It was also found that migrant workers had got stuck because they did not have authentic identification certificate with them. While talking to the media, workers said that they were not having Aadhaar cards as they were outside their village for long. After the decision of the state government, lakhs of migrant workers started returning to Odisha. Due to the spread of the coronavirus nationwide lockdown started on 25 March 2020, Odisha Government announced that all state people residing in other states or countries must return and a registration portal opened for them. Those workers in Surat, who had failed to enter their Aadhaar number missed the opportunity and suffered from various problems. There were approximately 4 lakh people registered and many of them could not register on the portal. Migrant workers in North Maharashtra lost their work as the plywood factory in Wada (Palghar district) closed and did not pay wage too. There were 28 workers. While talking to the media, they mentioned that they could depend only on their meager savings. In this situation, we want to return to our family”, told one of these workers to *The Wire* via on the phone. In reply to this situation, the social activist, Sandeep Patnaik, said that “Aadhaar card number cannot be used as the sole proof of identification for labourers’ return to their home state in this emergency. The state government cannot exclude migrants for failure to produce an Aadhaar card,” Changing order and guidelines Government leads to high rate of illegal entry of migrant labourers, as a result of which corona infection increases day by day. Coronavirus has affected human life and people panic over the pandemic. Odisha registers the biggest COVID-19 spike, mostly migrants from Surat (Down To Earth, 2020). The spread of coronavirus through returning migrants created an extra burden on the state of the Government. It becomes too difficult to control the infection. Stressing contact details, travel history, and capturing the right person affected by COVID-19 was too much difficult for the Odisha Government. In May 2020, there were 34 persons found corona positive and they were all return migrants. This was alarming and more than five lakh people have already registered to return. Some people belong to Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Bhadrak, so day by day infection was spreading to many districts of Odisha due to travel by buses and trains. Rules and guidelines were formed for those return migrants including mandatory registration and 14 days quarantine. Millions of migrant workers from Odisha (Ganjam) were found in problems in different states. The situation was out of control when lakhs of migrants started returning because arranging quarantine centre and all logistics was not an easy task in a short period followed by sample testing.

As per the report of The Wire, in June 2020 around two lakhs of people returned from different states and were kept in quarantine centres.

3. Problems and issues of migrant labourers

Usually, people migrate on their interest and so also return to home. But at present, they are displaced (it is permanent or temporary no one can say) forcefully by the COVID-19 situation. And of course, the financial crisis of the country can be one of these reasons that force them to migrate immediately without any planning for the future. At present, migrant labourers are under double pressure from destination and source states due to COVID-19. As per some of the news reports and observations, migrant workers especially daily wage labourers are facing comments like- ‘you are labourers keep silence’, ‘they are treated as untouchables and unsociable’. Migrant labourers want to return to home and the government has its guidelines and boundaries to lead them. But people do not follow these rules and regulations which lead to the growing number of corona infections speedily.

4. Gender and vulnerability

Walking, riding a bicycle long-distance has made both men and women vulnerable. In some cases, migrant workers have broken Government rules and brought problems into their life on their own. As per the researcher’s observations, in the urban city of Bhubaneswar, 10/20 migrant workers all at a time came illegally by a truck on their own arrangements and dropped down on the roadside to rest under a tree, or anywhere they thought would be comfortable. It happened almost every day in all districts which were not in the news. Women, adult girls, and also children accompanied them. No privacy for women and girls was available. They might get harassed sexually, physically by unknown people and even by male members of their own group. There was no guarantee for their safety. There was news on a woman delivering a child who afterwards continued her journey home

As far as women migrant labourers’ issue was concerned, they suffered from various problems i.e. financial, social, and emotional constraints due to COVID-19 lockdown situations. There were women migrant industrial labourers from Khurda district, working in Bangalore who complained about their negligence by the state government by stating that, they were on the way to return to their family, but there was no security on the road. Adding to this, they talked to the media with tears and anger. The company owner made them work without any provision of safety and security. They were afraid of losing their livelihood and, also, their life far away from their dear ones, unnoticed. It shows that feeling of insecurity in them ran so high that they were ready to leave their source of

income. They have been waiting desperately to return home. Unfortunately, nobody is bothered about these matters. Especially gender-segregated data is unavailable i.e. how many men and women migrants are returning and where are they staying etc. After returning they need to stay in a quarantine centre where there was neither safety nor security for the migrants, especially for women.

In another case, the desperate women migrants working in the garment, spinning, and textile factories of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka had sent videos stating their problems to the Odisha Government. When the lockdown was imposed nobody listened to them, and when factories opened their work pressure multiplied and they are being victimized out of this.

From 2020 till the lockdown shut down the situation in 2021, the scenario has not changed. Today also there are problems like unemployment, disconnections and education is in the worst condition. Schools have not yet started; colleges and universities are still closed. Online classes and examinations have made students lazier and led them to disinterested study. Online study has given rise to many problems among youth including habituation with wrong activities and increased number of mobile users. Even small children of classes four and five are addicted to mobile phones. Several online abuse cases were found during the research study. Girls face lots of problems while studying online. Adequate data found from primary research evidence the fact that girls of 9th and 10th class were being asked sexual favour by both the teachers and the boys of their class. But they were not responding to such demands rather were telling their parents and friends about this. Those who were using their parents' mobile were successful in solving the problem. But the data also revealed that some of them entertained the calls, enjoying the sexual remarks online as well as through the phone.

Return migrant women are facing lots of problems regarding their income, livelihood, education of their children, etc. Since they left their income source during the emerging situation of COVID-19, they are, at present, suffering various problems at home. Women and girls who have been working from home in multinational companies are in a good position, but the women working in labour industries, factories, and daily wage activities are victimized through the coronavirus. Those women, who could not return are also suffering due to work pressure because return migrants were not called again to work in the same place. Although the pandemic situation has affected everyone irrespective of gender, men are returning to the workplace easily as compared to women. Even though the previous company is not interested to call, men can go to some other states or districts and start new work again.

5. Conclusion

Migration for better livelihood is not bad at all. Well-educated people also move from one place to another for better opportunities in terms of more income and to have job satisfaction. But daily wage labourers are more vulnerable because they are unskilled and low-paid workers. Everywhere they are treated as low-grade workers. The present situation of COVID-19 can be controlled if migrant workers follow the rules of the government. Simultaneously, Governmental attitude and social feelings for migrants should be changed. Of course, we cannot question the works of police personnel as they have been committed to safety and security for the last two months, but if only they could check the short route of movement, illegal movement of migrant workers can be controlled and also the spreading of COVID-19 infections. If migrants are compelled to have a swab test, they should be urgently certified that they are fine and, in case of difficulty, should be allowed to stay for more than 7 days in-home quarantine instead of condemning them to unwelcome remarks and comments. Any adverse remarks against them increase the feeling of vulnerability among migrant labourers. The overall discussion concludes that the COVID-19 situation is creating fear, anxiety, and panic among migrant workers. Preferably, there should be favourable arrangements for them in their workplace instead of allowing them to return with the highest form of vulnerability. Of course, both men and women migrant labourers are suffering but comparatively women's suffering becomes more prominent when studied from various angles as their role in family management is that of a mother, wife, daughter, and sister. Women were disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Socially women labourers are not safe while working with the uncomfortable mindset so also while migrating in such a vulnerable condition. So, it is mandatory to consider their safety, security, and health issues and work on them. Gender division of labour, the gender dimension of labour migration, and gender analysis of the COVID-19 situation are the same. In every aspect, gender discrimination is found in this situation. They are frustrated in the workplace outside the state as well as in their home state after coming back. The State Government has been trying to provide better service to the COVID-19 affected people including migrant labourers through various sources. But there is a need to focus on gender-segregated data on migrant labourers and treat both male and female migrants equally and effectively from all aspects. COVID-19 has been affecting human life till today and the future is uncertain due to coronavirus. Gender analysis of the situation is quite despairing. Women workers are in more vulnerable conditions than that men. There are no such replacement options available to women. So, the negligence of women should be duly reckoned by the State government, so they can start their work again with full vigour.

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6

Gender Equality and Empowerment: Preventing Violence and Promoting Health and Well-Being of Women at Workplace

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Abstract

Since time immemorial, gender inequality and women disempowerment have been inherent in all cultures and societies. Women are unnerved in different domains, and men-women interaction in a co-existing environment is multi-dimensional. Nevertheless, these have always turned out to be potential indicators of certain key issues. When the indicators are ‘equality/inequality’ or ‘empowerment/disempowerment’, there the crux is driven by discrimination in terms of gender and interests. The man-woman power-structure is always understood with the attachment of sex which means that the rights, roles, and attitudes associated with sex are very different and valued in a greater manner for a man than in the case of a woman. As a result, women are victimized, and therefore, ideas like equality and well-being are dismissed. In such a scenario, the thoughts which could be implemented into actions are ‘prevention’ and ‘empowerment’. My paper, therefore, aims to discuss and analyze the problematics and the locus of these indicators; further asserting facts and suggesting measures to prevent violence and promote women’s health and well-being at the workspace.

Keywords: equality/inequality, empowerment/disempowerment, gender, discrimination, hyper-sexualization, sensitization

1. Introduction

It is in the workplace that adults spend much of their days in contact with their female colleagues. Violence against women circumscribes a larger ambit counting on the very idea of violence in form of physical, emotional, sexual, and other forms of abuse, may it be from an intimate partner or a stranger for that matter. Violence against women amounts to acts of coercion, threat, or “arbitrary deprivation of liberty”. On the eradication of violence against women, United Nations proclaims, “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (1993). Both men and women can be the victims of violence. Hyper-sexualization and misogynist conduct and attitude at workstation are the reason for which a staff member experiences adverse circumstances. Indecent assault may come in the form of any kind of forceful sexual enterprise where the other person does not consent to the same. Any unwanted sexual comment or behaviour may constitute sexual violence. Policies or programmes retort to these happenings of brutality merely on a superficial level rather than going deeper into it and within the cultural sphere of the workstation, which therefore accepts greater inequity.

Discrimination based on gender is the crux of violence against women. This indicates the sort of behavior that involves disproportionate access to power, resource, and opportunities that involve social or economic status. The agenda behind this is to position women as an underdog, rather than a decision-maker. Nonequivalence of gender is rampant in almost all spheres of society as a result of which, women are subject to violence.

2. Analysis

The government of India considering the increasing number of molestation that women encounter at their respective work stations, felt an imperative need to bring a legislative measure in the form of an Act to provide justice to the victims to prevent the occurrence of such cases to create a conducive and healthy atmosphere for women workers to work along with their male employees. “The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace: Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal Act (2013)” is a crucial administrative course of action carried out to redeem women encountering molestation at their workspace. Molestation along with all kinds of harassment is a direct blow to women’s liberty and rights as equals. It further initiates a sense of insecurity and malice within the working environment. The need for enforcement of such a law was felt in *Visakha versus the State of Rajasthan* case. In the year 1993, through “Article 14, 15, 19(1) (g) and 21”, the Indian Constitution was embodied with the basic principles

of human rights and has the generous provision for the eradication of all sorts of nonequivalence against women (The Supreme Court of India, 1993). All these laws come under Article 141 of our Constitution. Gesture, posture, use of vulgar language, palpation, gaining ground (advances), either to beg for or to dictate sex, being fetish, or communicating verbally or non-verbally in terms of salacity are always unwelcomed at the workplace. Further, the Act anticipates the arrangement of the “Internal Complaint Committee” in all the work stations and the firms engaging more than 10 staff members. On the other hand, when the number of staff is less than 10, the District Officer in that case, for every district must make arrangements of “Local Committee”. The verdict on “Ruchika Singh Chhabra vs M/C Air Force India” by the Delhi High Court proclaimed, “The ICC should be constituted in strict compliance with requirements under the law. An aggrieved woman can file a complaint to ICC / LC from 3 months from the date of the occurrence of the incident. Before initiating an inquiry, the committee may take steps to settle the matter between her and the respondent amicably by counseling. If the conciliatory measure fails then the committee shall move further with the enquiry.” If at all a false case is filed, then there is the provision that abiding by the service jurisdiction, the District officer can arbitrate strictly. Sometimes the identification of the indignant woman or the defendant ought to be concealed. Therefore, prohibitions have been imposed on reporting the identification details of the indignant woman, defendant, attest, essentialities of the allegation, inquiry lawsuits, or the Jury’s recommendation omitting details procured for the sufferers of molestation.

Even if the Acts are in force since 2013, necessary awareness is yet to be created. The successful execution of the “POSH Act” necessitates building up an atmosphere that encourages women’s fearless and anxiety-free expression. For full justice to be given to women there is a need to hold as many gender sensitization programmes for men and women as possible. Men should develop the right manner of behaviour and attitude toward women in the workplace. Women should not unnecessarily create trouble for men. Both of them should have a symbiotic relationship with each other based on mutual respect and goodwill. To maintain peace, harmony and healthy relationship at the workplace employees need to be complementary to each other.

The duties of the employer need to be highlighted here. It is the bounden duty of the employer to ensure safety and provide a healthy workspace. The employer has to facilitate the ICC with requisites to conduct inquiry fearlessly and safely. The employer has to make provision for the organization of many workshops and awareness programmes or gender sensitization programmes to make the employees aware of the law and the punishment attached to it. Everyone needs to be oriented. The employer has to furnish such particulars to the ‘Internal

Committee' and the 'Local Committee' since it could potentially require legal implication. Sexual harassment should be treated as malfeasance within the service jurisdiction, and undertaking against such malfeasance should immediately be initiated. The authority should monitor the timely submission of the report by the ICC. The authority should become aware of the dictum: "Justice delayed is justice denied". The employer should include the outcome of the case in the annual report. Government should have the power to call for the information and verification of the records. There should be the imposition of penalty for non-compliance of the report or deliberate delay in submission of the report.

Violence against women has serious physical and mental consequences on the victims. Health-related problems include greater levels of depression, anxiety, suicidal tendency, sleep-problems, enhanced level of substance misuse, low esteem, and social isolation. These may result in the lack of concentration at work, increasing defection and slothfulness, diversion from jobs/assignments, resignation from work or substandard performance, apprehensiveness, and loss of self-esteem, and loss of capability to tackle the disputes at the professional front. Both working and jobless women experience malefactors' interference at their workspace. Women generally interiorize self-accusation in favor of the assault. They are also at times intentionally blamed by others for provoking the situation. Hence, in many cases, women tend to be socially withdrawn. Women being victimized, restrain themselves in fear of shame and dishonor, from revealing or sharing their encounters with molestation. They presume that they may not receive a supportive response from other colleagues. The perpetrator of sexual violence often being senior people in the job may create a hostile work environment for the victim to survive and remain mentally free.

It is well-known that younger women aged between 18 to 25 years are at particular risk of becoming the victims of sexual violence. Women experience violence during pregnancy and in the period of falling marital separation. Young and unmarried women are very sensitive so they undergo tremendous psychological suffering because they are prone to molestations, even when the malefactor is their close relative.

Gender inequality at the workplace has adversely affected the global economy. To meet the challenges of reduction of poverty, building good governance, promoting sustainable development and gender equality is a precondition. Gender equality creates an enjoyable work environment. All categories of employees should feel comfortable at the workplace where there is no discrimination. From the workplace, all sexually explicit photographs, calendars, pornographic literature, pamphlets, and posters should be removed. Pornographic materials greatly affect the sensitive mind of girls and young women. Nowadays, cyber

crimes have shown an increasing tendency at home on in the workplace. The employer should enforce a policy prohibiting the inappropriate use of computer technology. Employees should not engage in making offensive jokes. The employer must acquaint the new staff members with the sexual harassment policy and the punishment attached to it for any violation of the act. All sexual complaints should be treated with care, concern, fairly, timely, and confidentially without any discrimination. The employer should ensure full protection from victimization connected with sexual harassment.

In institutions, such strategies must be adopted so that sexual violence can be prevented effectively. When reports of violence do occur, an environment must be maintained in which staff feels that their complaints will be dealt with seriously and sensitively. What category of people is at greater risk of being targeted to sexual violence? Women or girls working alone are at special risk of physical and sexual violence. Many workers in the health sector such as night nurses do work alone and are therefore subjected to higher risk. A variety of occupations involve contact with the public. Exposure to the public may invite unavoidable risk to physical or mental violence. Working with valuables and handling a big amount of cash invite crime. Stress and violence at the workplace lead to disruption in interpersonal relationships.

Physical and psychological violence do occur simultaneously or consecutively. A series of behaviour under the general notion of violence such as bullying, mobbing, and sexual harassment have become the object of growing concern. Physical violence is often perpetrated through repeated behaviour which can have devastating effects on the victim. In most cases of assault, the assaulter happens to be a male fellow worker or a superior officer. The assaulter tends to read or interpret his acts as of friendly nature to disguise the perpetrator's evil intention to easily escape any sort of accusation. Given below are some of the ways to prevent violence against women.

- Men should choose words carefully and respectfully when speaking to women.
- Men who use their strength hurting women should be resisted or abhorred.
- Objection should be raised or registered against T.V., movies, and other media which define what it means to be a man.
- Treat all women and girls with respect.
- Do not patronize sex workers or striptease groups.
- Report if you witness violence against women at the workplace.

- Do not take advantage of an intoxicated and helplessly roaming person in their distressed condition.
- Avoid buying or encouraging music that glorifies sexual violence or the beautification of girls or women.
- Respect and help the choices victims and survivors make. Applaud people who speak against sexual violence and oppression.

Gender inequality is the uneven distribution of power between men and women. Women or girls with disabilities become easy prey to sexual violence because these people are unable to defend themselves for lack of physical strength. Every woman has a right to lead life decently with honour. No woman should be deprived of decent or honourable life in society. Modern society should not become barbarous. Gender-based violence proves to be a reflection of the disproportionate distribution of power between a man and a woman. A woman's assault is a serious human rights violation. It may occur at a point of time regardless of her going to work, being at the workspace, or returning from work. Gender-based violence may affect a woman in several courses. A woman who is victimized is often likely to be dismissed from her professional engagement for her allegations against a brutal fellow worker. Another reason for which she could be terminated is for remaining absent from her job for a long time. An interesting point of focus here is that the amount of mental injury she faces with regards to being absent from work is treated as a trivial issue. She might not be able to concentrate on her work after she has been victimized. A victimized woman in the worst-case succumbs to the malefactor's violence which is a desperate act on her part to secure her employment. From various studies, it is gathered that nearly 40 or 50 percent of women encounter unwelcomed intimidation, palpation, and various ways of assault in their professional space.

3. Conclusion

All races and ethnicities experience domestic violence particularly gender-based, at workplaces. Sexual violence is one of the most under-reported forms of violence in many countries. If a colleague discloses her experience of sexual harassment, then what role does the listener has to play? Allow the victim to tell you as much or as little as she wants to share without interrupting her words. As a colleague, one should not ask for unnecessary details. It may further aggravate the victim's mental suffering. Avoid overacting to what the victim tells you. Believe what she shares with you. Help her to understand what she is feeling right. A colleague's role is to support the victim but not to discourage her or terrify her about the consequences of the reported case. Reassure her that the incident is not her fault and she is in no way to be blamed.

Support her through discussion of the various options as the next step for the victim. Employers and superiors ought to discharge a lawful as well as a moral responsibility to *savoir-faire* the issue of ‘woman assault’ in the professional space which is again completely determined by gender. This initiative would potentially improve the employee’s physical and mental state of being, and minimize the after-effects of sexual harassment. Sexual violence has a lasting effect on the physical and psychological safety of the workers. Men folk should advocate for victims’ rights. Men should treat all girls and women with respect.

Sexual harassment is often a hidden issue. People may see sexual violence against women as normal or acceptable. With time the victims themselves may normalize their experiences and not see a reason to report them. Let us not assume that because there have been no complaints from workers the problem does not exist. Women for many reasons do not report sexual violence against them. Such a type of oppression of crime should not be encouraged. If a perpetrator’s crime is not brought to light, it may encourage him to indulge in violence against women repeatedly in the future. It is an evil instinct that occurs and spreads like a disease.

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7

Women, Workplace & Mental Wellbeing in Post-Pandemic ‘New Normal’

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Abstract

This paper will discuss the need to focus on the mental well-being in the workplace through a gendered lens in the post-COVID-19 scenario and propose a few feasible and measurable initiatives that the organizations can adopt to develop an ecosystem that will help in the smooth reintegration of the female employees with the workspace as they physically return to the office.

1. Introduction

Towards the fag end of 2019 the world witnessed a new infectious respiratory disease - Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Soon this fast transmitting infection and its numerous variants engulfed the global population leading to a pandemic. In this context, it must be mentioned that experts unanimously agree that the COVID-19 outbreak is more severe than the pandemic of 1918 (Spanish flu) that killed nearly 50 million people. While the impact of COVID-19 on health and life is massive, it also jeopardized the society and economy in the most unprecedented manner.

The pandemic has changed the way ‘normal’ life was perceived and had a major impact on marginalized and disempowered communities and social groups. COVID-19 exacerbated the pre-existing gender inequalities in society and exposed the gaps and prejudices that are inherently intertwined in our social matrix. A post-pandemic report by United Nations (2020) highlights how COVID-19 is making women socially more vulnerable than ever and the few positive actions implemented in the past few decades to bridge the gender inequality stands threatened by the repercussions of the pandemic. Even though socio-

economic stress has been experienced by people of working age groups in various degrees due to the pandemic and the following lockdown to control the spread, it has been brought to light that women¹ were significantly more affected - physically and mentally - than men.

With the nationwide lockdown being announced in India² the anatomy of work culture & family responsibilities changed completely. Working women now had to simultaneously juggle between office work & household chores with inadequate domestic and emotional support. Coupled with pay cuts, an increase in unpaid chores, physical and mental exhaustion, there was also a significant rise in domestic abuse. As per official statistics, the National Commission for Women (NCW) received as many as 1,477 complaints of domestic abuse between 25th March and 31st May 2020 (Taskin, 2021). One primary reason for the rise in abuse was being confined with the abuser in isolation for a prolonged period. A report by UN Women (2021) suggests that the rise in abuse is not entirely an outcome of the pandemic; even before the pandemic, globally 1 in 3 women have spoken about physical or sexual violence that was inflicted by their partner. The pandemic has only aggravated the situation. With support services earlier available to address these violence and violent situations being gradually diverted to accommodate COVID-19 emergencies, the situation has been more than grim for women and effort needs to be made to help women recover and heal fast. Needless to say, such environmental factors play a crucial role in workplace performance.

In the given context, the objective of this paper will be to deconstruct on ‘why’ mental well-being of female employees needs immediate attention and ‘how’ the organizations can address their psychological needs.

2. Perspectives

With increased awareness and opportunities, women are moving beyond the traditional designated role of handling home and hearth. More and more female participation is witnessed in public spaces as they are breaking the glass ceiling. While professionally women are taking a lead in numerous sectors the traditional role of rearing children, taking care of family, looking after children’s education, and being caregivers to the elderly or sick remain predominantly their domain. This career-family conflict coupled with handling multiple roles and responsibilities has a deep impact on the psychological well-being of women. This already over-burdened routine is further intensified during crisis periods like the pandemic where owing to the gendered division of labour most of the unpaid labour

¹The paper focuses on experiences of married women only, not of unmarried or trans women.

²In March 2020

intensive household chores – cleaning, cooking, dusting, washing, moping, etc., are managed by the women. This results in physical exhaustion that leaves barely any time for productive engagements in the workspace or getting enough time for self.

While the domestic space is cramped, the world outside is filled with acute crises related to employment. Globally the gender pay gap is at 19% (International Labour Organisation, 2021a) and close to 60% of women engaged in the informal economy do not have access to health and other benefits. A study published in World Economic Forum suggests that worldwide as many 114 million people lost their jobs in 2020 owing to the impact of COVID-19 (Richter, 2021). Such realities too result in creating an undue pressure on women to stay more aligned with the needs of the workspace that expects them to work beyond the designated work hours and resolve issues remotely that might call for their participation at late hours or even on weekends. As the organizations are struggling to recover the expenses and meet the profit margins the employees are also struggling to retain their jobs. The uncertainty of employment engagement makes women continue with their jobs working harder without complaining about long hours. To accommodate the need of the job and avoid lay-offs (especially in families headed by women or with single female parents) they usually postpone taking leaves even if that means burning themselves out beyond the limit. Added to this physical and mental fatigue is the feeling of guilt that makes women perceive as if they have not contributed enough to their workplace. This situation worsens as women in their 30s and 40s experience more fatigue and a sense of helplessness as there is an obvious blurring of workload in absence of any help and each waking moment is dedicated to organizing tasks so that duties are undertaken in office or home is not compromised.

It is common knowledge that epidemics and pandemics play a crucial role in deciding working women's financial independence and mental health. When the Ebola outbreak took place in Africa in the year 2014-15 many traders lost their livelihoods. Surprisingly among all the affected traders, 85% were women, which implies that women had to struggle more than the men during the outbreak. In a survey conducted by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (2015) in India, women were found carrying out six hours of extra unpaid work while men worked for less than an hour. In trying times like the pandemic, when pay cuts and job losses are commonplace it is usually the responsibility of the women to keep the financial balance of the family intact. With all academic institutions deciding to stop conducting classes within their respective premises because of the pandemic, the children of all age groups were now forced to continue with their academic sessions from home. Due to

this alternative arrangement, women found themselves struggling to arrange uninterrupted technology (laptop, internet, smartphone, etc.) for smooth conduct of academic sessions for children (both school & college level) as they continue to pursue their classes from home, all this while ensuring that the professional engagement of the adults in the family as well as their own is not compromised with. Such situations also act as a catalyst to trigger the stress level among working women. A recent study by Thibaut et al. (2021) has conclusively suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic has been more unforgiving to women than to men. In this context, Mrs. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive director of United Nations (UN) Women says: COVID-19 pandemic is not just a health issue, it is a profound shock to our societies exposing the deficiencies of public and private arrangements that currently function only if women play multiple and underpaid roles. This is a moment for governments to recognize both the enormity of the contribution women make and the precarity of so many³.

ILO Briefing Note 2021 too reiterates the discrepancy and points out that worldwide employment loss for women is 5 percent; whereas for men, the number was 3.9% (International Labour Organisation, (2021b)). The survey conducted by CARE International⁴ consisting of 6200 women and 4000 men from across 40 countries reported that during the pandemic 27% of women participating in the survey spoke about some or other form of discomfort like loss of appetite, sleeplessness, anxiety, etc whereas in the same survey only 10% of men spoke of similar disturbing experiences (Broster, 2020). Studied Mayer (2020) have further revealed that as many as 83% of working women have reported growth in depression level whereas only 36% of working men reported the same. Moreover, anxiety levels among women employees have significantly gone up with 52% acknowledging the same while only 29% of their male respondents complained of anxiety. A survey of PTI (2020) was conducted between July 27th and August 23rd, 2020 to understand the impact of the pandemic on female working professionals in India. The survey collected responses from 2,254 women professionals and gave insights into some interesting facts. As many as 44% (more than 2 out of 5 respondents) of career mothers said they worked beyond business hours to ensure that their child received quality care as opposed to only 25% of men. The same study also revealed that only 1 in 5 (20%) working moms said they took the help of their family members or acquaintances to look after the child, whereas 32% of men relied on some support network to look after their children.

³ibid

⁴A humanitarian NGO was established in 1945 and spread across 104 countries.

In the light of the given situation, the businesses need to reorient their focus on the mental well-being of the female employees. Of course, in the past few decades employee well-being -physical and mental - has gained considerable attention in businesses. Institutions and organizations have realized that the well-being of an employee has an impact on his/her behaviour, engagement, attitude, and performance which translates into business profitability. A progressive organization takes care to pay equal attention to both the physical and mental health of its employees. And in volatile times like the pandemic, which has affected employees differently based on their income ability and demography, organizations are taking extra care to address the psychological distress. It is well known that ignoring the mental health of employees, in the long run, has a direct negative impact on the profit level of the organization as well as raises concerns about organizational practices and company culture. Moreover, inclusive organizations should adopt an extremely sensitive approach while dealing with the women workforce because for professional women, mental health is directly associated with both their domestic and workspace experiences - understanding with colleagues or reporting managers and support received from the organization. A lack of support from the organization could result in the rise of depression, stress, and anxiety among women employees that could have severe consequences in the general organizational structure and behaviour.

To address the everyday realities of psychological anxiety, businesses need to strengthen their employee health engagement policies that will help in nurturing a strong supportive ecosystem that nurtures an empathetic approach towards mental health concerns of the women workforce. As employees report to the workplace (in varying percentages) the HR teams and top leaderships must work together to create and implement strong COVID-19 mental support initiatives. This is especially needed for the female workforce who has been coping psychologically during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis due to the loss of near and dear ones, working as a caregiver for the sick, coming to terms with pay cuts, etc. Women returning to work after recovering from a virus infection or maternity break need special attention as social isolation aggravates the condition of postpartum depression and social awkwardness associated with being infected with COVID-19. Moreover, anyone with a history of physical or mental health problems should be helped in the best possible manner to integrate better with the needs of the 'new normal'.

For institutions and industries, it is high time to define what they identify as mental health. Since new realities are incomplete without masks and continuous sanitization along with physical hygiene virtual sessions on mental healing must be introduced so that people from various departments can attend the sessions

right from their workstations without risking the social distancing protocol. Some online programs can be organized where female employees share their experiences of working from home and build a sensitivity training group. Measures must be taken to implement methods that help in building mindfulness. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic employees in general and women, in particular, did not have access to standard health care means and thus, probably missing out on their yearly health check-ups, especially those above forty years of age. Once the women employees decide to return to the workplace, the institutions can initiate a health check-up program (adhering to all the preventive measures to ensure safety) including but not limited to measuring blood pressure, diabetes, and conducting mammography. Assurance of having sound health always has a positive impact on psychology. Also in case of any concerns, further examinations can be conducted without delay, thus addressing the health concern at its initial stage. Continuing with the wellness initiative, organizations can host a holistic fitness challenge program for their women employees that will have a positive impact on their minds and body. Feedback forms can be created and circulated among female employees and regularly analyzed to identify at-risk female employees. But it must be borne in mind that just implementing strategies will never be enough unless the organization creates parameters to measure the success of the program. Without a regular performance analysis, even the best of employee benefit plans and ideas are bound to receive a lukewarm response from employees.

A recently conducted survey by Ranji et al. (2021) has suggested that as many as 48% of women left their jobs during the pandemic because they felt their workplace was not safe enough for handling risks related to COVID-19. As the organizations sanitize the workplace regularly and provide hand sanitizers or masks as preventive measures, the female employees must ensure that they embrace the safety protocols and regularly sanitize their hands (either with soap or sanitizer) and keep their masks on while maintaining physical distancing. Though it has been conclusively proven that women are better at maintaining hand hygiene than men (Onion, 2020), still organisations must consider sending gentle reminders to all the workforce on the need to regularly wash hands by posting signs in common areas or bathrooms. This simple but effective step will help in creating a positive ambiance and will make employees feel less anxious about safety in workplace and help them stay more focused at work.

Female employees must be regularly informed about measures to be undertaken if they are exposed to clinical contact. They should also be kept abreast of organizational guidelines on when and how can they avail leave in case they are infected with COVID-19 or someone from the immediate family or dependent family member is infected with. Businesses need to conduct regular

programs for all employees, especially the women employees, related to myths and misinformation circulating around COVID-19 infection. It is important to understand that care must be taken to educate women employees on these safety measures because more often than not they extend help as a caregiver. Once the female employees are coached, they can train their families on the same, and a sense of psychological satisfaction is achieved through this knowledge acquiring and transfer. While disseminating information on COVID-19 the organizations must ensure that they are referring to credible sources. The information shared must be from reliable sources like government agencies, public health departments, local state authorities, medical organizations, research journals, etc.

Another significant aspect that the organizations must look into is the health of pregnant female employees. Pregnant employees must be informed about the risks and dangers of not adopting precautions at the workplace and beyond; also about further preventive measures that they can inculcate to feel more confident at the workplace. But most importantly the organizations must question, should they ask pregnant employees to report at the workplace or can they continue working from home. If they have to physically visit the workplace then what are the prerequisites that must be considered before having them in office. Another concern that must be pondered over is the availability of a crèche facility. Following the laws laid by the government and as part of pro-employee benefit measures, numerous organizations offer daycare or crèche facilities for the children of their female employees. But during the post-pandemic period, the organizations must question themselves if they are in a position to provide for the safety of the children who will be part of the day-care. With all the trimmings going on in the budget owing to the financial instability the business must have a clear understanding of how they can best support their teams. The organizations must have clear communication with the employees on the same much before the workforce decides to return. In absence of a proper action plan confusion and panic will be created - the last thing that institutions or employees should be looking forward to.

Though the onus lies on the organizations to make the workforce feel welcome in the office once things are more agreeable in the post-pandemic period, the employees must understand that ensuring safety and hygiene is a two-way process where both employees and organization work together to create a more powerful work culture. For women, psychological uneasiness is as real and as challenging as physical fatigue and that is why they must participate actively in discussing and providing feedback to the guidelines provided by the company. The women workforce must voice themselves to address their concerns and help the company understand the situation better in case it has

not been so.

3. Conclusion

The COVID-19 infection has brought about a sea change in our lives and surroundings. With words like bio-bubble, self-quarantine, social distancing, super spreader, epidemic, containment, herd immunity sneaking into our everyday conversations we, as a society, have to work together to sail through this unprecedented global crisis both in domestic and public places. Moreover, as women struggle with a range of mental disturbances which has a direct impact on their work industries must encourage practicing mental well-being and measure the progress regularly. It will be easier for the women workforce to navigate during these crucial times if companies offer a hybrid working model and clear communication channels for transparent discussion on anxiety and other mental and emotional concerns. New normal requires new solutions. And this can be achieved not by ignoring but by ensuring that both business and employees hold an empathetic view towards each other. After all, addressing the mental wellbeing of women employees is a business-critical skill that only requires a bit of organizational support and inclusive work culture practice.

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8

Education, Socio-Economic Development and Empowering the Paraja Tribal Women of Koraput District, Odisha

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Abstract

The mechanism of development within a society owes its effectiveness to the levels of people's knowledge and awareness of various factors of social structure. In this regard, the education system plays a major role in the spread of knowledge and awareness and thus the process of development. Odisha is regarded as the homeland of tribal's having total population of about 8.14 million constituting 23.13% of the total state population. There are sixty-two tribal communities found in Odisha. Among them the Paraja tribe in Koraput district is one of them, who lives in heart of the forest adopting old techniques and traditions in their day to day life. They are unaware of modern trends, technologies, development of the Government efforts at state, central and even at local level because of their illiteracy. Especially the Paraja women are still away from the main stream of the society. Illiteracy has deprived them from enjoying the fruits of modern developments, facilities and technology. Therefore, they are economically very weak. Education can create self-confidence among them and can inspire them to come within the developed society for their economic security and self-sufficiency. Awareness is needed among the women of Paraja community at government, private and personnel sphere. Then only they can achieve the path to developments.

Keywords: Paraja women, Effects of education, Empowerment, Development

1. Introduction

“Koraput with her rolling mountain, undulating meadows, roaring rapids, enchanting waterfalls and terraced valleys leading up to verdant hills, feasts the eye as few other districts. Koraput with her golden autumn and misty mornings of the monsoon months, her painted spring, and slumbering summer and her winter ranging from fierce to mild provide varieties of living in different seasons which is rare elsewhere”. Orissa District Gazetteers, Koraput, says this about the region of Koraput.

Once upon a time Koraput was under the Madras presidency and now it is included in the state of Odisha vide notification No-18, dated 01-04-1936 of the Government of Odisha. In 2nd October 1992 it was further divided into four districts, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur and Rayagada vide notification No.-49137/R dated 01.10.1992 of the revenue and exercise department, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar for administrative convenience. The undivided Koraput was one of the largest districts in Odisha and in the country (second in rank) with an area of about 891 square miles or 27,020 sq. kms. It is located in the southern-eastern region of Odisha, surrounded by Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

The most remarkable and unique identity of this region is that a fascinating mosaic of colourful tribal population inhabit here out of total 62 tribes of the state of Odisha. Among them, 52 tribes speak various tribal languages. So, this region has the largest tribal concentration of the total population of the region, as many as 53.74% belongs to scheduled tribes.

2. Objectives

The paper is the result of the fieldwork done in the villages named Rangakumbha, Chhapar, Semiliguda, Patangi, Boriguma in Koraput district based on primary data collection by ethonological method. The aim and objectives of this paper is to focus on the problems and challenges of women of Paraja community.

3. Koraput district at a glance

Table 1: Area and Population.

Sl.No.	Subject	Reference Year	Koraput
1.	Geographical Area	2011	8807 sq.km
2.	Population		
		2001 Census	2011 Census
	Male	590743	677864
	Female	589894	699070
	Total	1180637	1376943
	Rural	-	982188
	Urban	-	198449
	Scheduled Tribe	585830	-
	Scheduled Caste	153932	-
	Density of Population per square kms.	134	156
	Females per 1000 Males (Sex Ratio)	999	1031
	Total no. of Villages	2028	-
	k) Inhabited Village	1922	-
	No. of Households	284876	-
	% of S.T population to the district total population	49.62	-
		2002 Survey	
	Families below poverty line	280166	

Source: Council of Analytical Tribal Studies (COATS), Koraput

Table 2: Literacy rate in 2011 census provisional as per 2001 Census.

Sl.No.	Name of the District	Male (in %)	Female (in %)	Total (in %)	S.T Total (in %)	S.C. Total (in %)
1.	Koraput	61.29	38.92	49.87	18.68	35.43
2.	Rayagada	62.61	39.87	50.88	20.23	35.18
3.	Nabrangpur	59.45	37.22	48.2	24	45.36
4.	Malkangiri	60.29	38.95	49.49	14.49	49.94

Source: Census of India, 2011 Provisional Population Totals, Series - 22 (Table 2. Describes the Literacy growth in the year 2001 and 2011 Census).

4. Paraja Tribes in Koraput

The main tribes of Koraput are Paraja, Kandha, Gadaba, Durua, Bhatra and Bonda (Table 3). Out of all the tribal communities living in Koraput district, the Parajas are the most advanced in terms of their social, cultural and political activities. The Parajas are known by various terms such as Bada Paraja, Sana Paraja, Pengu Paraja, Parenga Paraja, Jhadia Paraja and Chhelia Paraja.

They live in the heart of the forest. They are largely concentrated in Koraput, Semiliguda, Nandapur, Potangi, Jeypore, Dasmantpur, Baipariguda, Kundra and Borigumma. The geographical location still keeps the region isolated from the

coastal area. Lack of communication and interaction keep them away from the outside world. So, they are still now primitive in their outlook and maintenance of life. They lead an isolated life and in a poor living condition. Their economy is forest oriented. Health science, for them is to follow their traditional way. Modernity has also little effect on them. Some changes are noticed at present but those changes are not remarkable. In the field of education, they are still backward.

They belong to the Dravidian language family. The Parajas have their own unique cultural heritage like any tribal communities. Religion, beliefs, and rituals are inextricably linked to the life of the Parajas. These are the societal patterns which they have followed for generations. To meet their religious demands, they worship various elements of nature. They not only believe in supernatural powers, but they also worship their forefathers on auspicious occasions. In Odia literature the eminent novelist Gopinath Mohanty's novel PARAJA which has narrated about life style of the Paraja tribes in Odisha.

Table 3: Block wise habitation of tribes Koraput region.

Sl.No.	District	Sub Division	Block	Name of the tribes
1.	Koraput	Koraput sub division	[1] Koraput	Paraja, Kandha
			[2] Semiliguda	Paraja, Kandha, Gadaba
			[3] Pottangi	Kandha, Paraja, Kotia, Gadaba
			[4] Nandpur	Paraja, Kandha, Kotia
			[5] Lamtaput	Paraja, Kandha, Gadaba
			[6] Dasmanthpur	Paraja, Kandha
			[7] Laxmipur	Paraja, Kandha
			[8] Narayanapatna	Kandha
			[9] Banddhugaon	Kandha
2.	Jeypore	Jeypore Sub division	[1] Jeypore	Paraja, Gadaba, Bhumia, Dharua, Halwa
			[2] Boipariguda	Bhumia, Paraja, Durua
			[3] Kundra	Bhumia, Paraja, Durua, Kandha, Pentia, Bhatra
			[4] Kotpad	Bhatra, Durua
			[5] Borigumma	Paraja, Bhatara, Amanatya, Pentia

Source: Tribal Museum, Koraput (Table 3. Shows that the existence of Paraja tribes in Koraput District, Odisha).

5. Status of Paraja Women in Koraput

Status of women is generally measured by education, employment and household decision-making power in the family. The Paraja women are born and brought up in the lap of nature and are educated in traditional, socialization process. Koraput's tribal community has a traditional educational system known as a

“youth dormitory”, in which young boys and girls are trained together or separately for their responsibilities in adult life. But the social status of Paraja women is high because in various aspects of social life. They play a crucial role in their society’s socioeconomic and cultural structure of the society. They had much freedom and control in all aspects of life. Yet, it is still important to emphasize that the tribal women in herself is exactly the same as any other women with the same passion, love and fear, devotion to home, to husband and children are all same, though the tribal women are away from the main stream society. The Paraja woman has the freedom to choose her life partner without any restriction. She is considered as ‘Kanya Suna’ bride price an economic asset. In their society tribal groom has to pay bride price called “Jhola tanka” to the bride’s father on the occasion of marriage keeping in mind the economic loss the father is going to face thereafter.

The Paraja women in society are considered as economic asset of the family. They rise very early in the morning, get engaged in the household works, and then they go to the forest or fields carrying food and babies at their back. They adopt different types of occupation like agriculture, collection of food and forest product, wage labour for their survival. They participate actively along with men to earn their livelihood. They don’t just save money; they also earn it. In fact, they work really hard for their family but live-in squalor. But without them the tribal welfare is meaningless. Lack of communications and interaction with outside world keep them mostly illiterate and ignorant, so they are primitive in technology, very poor in their living and because of their poverty, illiteracy, ignorance and simplicity they are more exploited by modern society.

Field study in tribal villages of Koraput district has shown that there is little concern about the development of girl child and women in health care, hygiene, education, economic freedom and legal rights. During adult life at last they get some financial freedom by working hard by themselves. But as their age passes and their physical stamina declines, they become dependent on others. And life becomes very hard again for them. If they are properly educated they can plan something for their future. The Paraja women still have less access to education than men. Even young Paraja girl cannot afford to complete primary school or basic education. Only a few girls of their society continue higher education. It is a fact that when girls are not educated on the same level as boys, it has an adverse effect on their future. Due to lack of education the Paraja women remain unaware about their legal rights, health issues, different developmental policy and available opportunities.

6. Empowerment as a Concept

- Power is the key word in the expression “empowerment”.
- It implies access, control and say in the decision-making process in social, economic or political aspects of life at the family or social level including a right over one’s own biological functions and needs.
- It is a process, which changes existing power relations by addressing itself to the three dimensions: material, human and intellectual resources.
- It is a transition process and a challenge in ideology, the set of ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and actions that are associated with gender bias or social discrimination.

6.1. Concept of women empowerment

- The terms women’s empowerment has multiple meaning and interpretations.
- Economic empowerment is based on women’s participation in decision making process with regard to raising incomes, investments and expenditure at all levels.
- Economic development is an essential step out of poverty.
- The entire effort of empowerment of women is to help them to exercise their rights in decision making in every sphere, both within and outside the house hold.
 - Efforts are on to ensure their ownership of family/community assets.
 - Empowerment refers to all sphere of life.

7. Policy of Empowerment of Women, 2001

During these days policy makers and development planners at various National and International levels have given emphasis on women’s empowerment policy.

7.1. The National policy for the women’s empowerment in all fields

- Creating an atmosphere that allows women to reach their full potential through favourable economic and social policies.
- Equal access of participation and decision making in social, political and economic life.
- Equal access of women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security.

- Strengthening legal system to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.
- Changing societal attitudes and community practice on both men and women.
- Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.
- Developing skills for women's livelihood by various training programs.
- Promoting the income activities by creating Self-help Groups for women.

8. Empowerment of Tribal Women

It is very clear that women's empowerment is critical for the growth of every community. Literacy, education, better health care, equal ownership of productive resources, increased engagement in the economic and commercial sectors, understanding of rights and duties, increased living standards, self-reliance, self-esteem, and self-confidence are all examples of empowerment.

8.1. Paraja Tribal Women and Education

Empowerment of tribal women through education is a central issue in determining their status in Koraput. Health care is a major problem of tribal community. Their bad health is exacerbated by a lack of food security, sanitation, adequate drinking water, poor nutrition, and poverty. They have faith on their own traditional systems cannot prevent many diseases that modern medicine can.

Paraja communities are connected deeply with the forest. They are yet to get acquainted to the modern means of information and communication technology. As a result, they are deprived from all forms of government and non-government special welfare and development programmes. The government has implemented various programs to encourage the tribal's to take up new ventures. From tribal sub-plan strategy to PESA Act, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NAREGA), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) has been launched for improvement of their life style. Yet due to lack of proper education, tribal's cannot utilize the opportunity of these plan or programmes of the government.

Education is an important means of empowering the tribal women having the ability and self-assurance to contribute to the development process.

- **The lower enrolment of tribal girls in school:** In tribal community there is a belief that there is no need for the girls to go to school. It will be

waste of time. Their parents feel girls are needed for home and field. So, they do not have time for studies. Parental negligence is playing an important part in the deteriorating status of women. They do not attribute much importance to education of girls. This is the cause for the compulsory dropout from school at an early age of child.

- **Engagement of girl child in household works:** The girl child plays the role of second mother by shouldering the responsibilities of household work such as clearing the house and utensils, cooking food, fetching water, collecting firewood, looking after younger brother and sister etc. This means girl child is handicapped and discouraged to go to school as it becomes secondary. Poverty strikes the girl child from the door of school too. Girls are considered economic assets as they bring income for livelihood. The parents don't want to allow their girl go to school.
- **Teacher's absenteeism:** It is one of the major causes for the dropout of girl child in school. Due to lack of communication and transport facilities the teachers of tribal areas are not serious to stay present in the school every day.
- **School language and teaching curriculum:** They are not favorable to the tribal girls. The tribals have their own local dialect. They have limited contact with the state language. Government and private schools are using the state language for teaching and communication, which is not familiar to a tribal child. They are not able to understand the book language and the text properly. Of late the Govt. of Odisha has given importance to tribal dialect in the state. It can help improve the quality of teaching in class room.

9. Observations and Realization

It is clear that women empowerment cannot be achieved unless education of women is considered at the highest priority.

Better education expands economic opportunities for women and helps them their family and communities.

The Government of India launched the National Literacy Mission in 1998 as an important part of the National Policy of Education. It has highlighted social awareness among women, motivated and encouraged women learners to educate their children.

10. Suggestion

- Though poverty or low enrolment of tribal girls at school closes the doors for development and prosperity of future generation of women, concerted efforts must be initiated jointly by the government, parents and society to achieve the target point for girls without any compromise.
- Bonded child labour practice in tribal society must be abolished with strict administrative measures.
- The parental awareness can be ensured when the enlightened community members, leaders and teachers motivate parents through frequent interaction and participation to improve the status of women.
- To create mass awareness about women's problems and rights.
- To train the women to participate with equality in socio-economic development through various training programmes.

11. Conclusion

Education of the tribal women not only improves the individuals' standard of living but also enhances her self-images. Educated women can recognize the importance of health care and know how to seek help for themselves. They become conscious of their rights and develop confidence to claim them. Lastly it makes women to find the right way to proceed.

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9

Women in Science and Technology in Pre- and Post-Independent India

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Abstract

Women are underrepresented in science and technology career in our country because of the social constraints, family obligations, biases, low GER in Higher Education, Skewed Employment Opportunities and the ‘Glass Ceiling Syndrome’. To address the issue, Government of India has launched several fellowship schemes like DST Women Scientist Fellowship, Begum Hazrat Mahal National Scholarship, Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Girl Child etc. in various ministries to eliminate the barriers in the career progression of women. Scholarly researchers have pointed their finger on masculinity of computers and women’s preference for relational work. The paper focuses on the incremental growth of women in higher educational institutions, vocational training, contribution to science and technology, information technology and national progress.

Keywords: Diversity in science and technology, Gender balance, Occupational choice, Academic promotion

1. Introduction

After independence, about 65 years ago, in the *era* of the first woman Prime Minister of India, Smt. Indira Gandhi (1966-1984), who was known as the ‘Iron Lady of India’, female students have inclined their interest towards science and technology (S&T) both at secondary and tertiary level of organization. She was the image of a strong and determined woman. During her 3-consecutive terms of Prime Minister-ship she has served as a role model of women empowerment. She was the initiator of wildlife preservation and environmental

conservation. Looking into the acute food shortages in the country during 1960's she started the Green Revolution under her leadership. Her 'ecological patriotism' has led our country to start the various nature conservation Acts. She made the first Committee on 'Environmental Planning and Coordination', NCEPC, on 6 December, 1971 (Rangarajan, 2009). She made a shift in the policy linking livelihood with commerce because of which the tribals who were the forest fringe dwellers were motivated to conservation. In 1983, she along with M.S. Swaminathan's Committee made sure of the conservation of rain forests for alternative sources of power and irrigation. It was during her regime that women came into forefront in S&T. In her leadership, many modern technologies like nuclear energy, information technology and biotechnology gained momentum. Her success showed us 'the importance of taking one's surroundings and not letting one's gender define the role. Her tenure broke the glass ceiling for women when the nation was still steeped in stereotypes and was not ready to witness a woman 'call the shots'.

During the seventies, women came into a broader scenario of S&T to demonstrate their capabilities to take military decisions (Hanson, 1996). Female students who got their degree from university in S&T were low paid in their career in comparison to their male counterparts (Eisenhart and Finkel, 1998). However, female were more attracted to this branch because the work environment provided them with sufficient comfort and respect. As per the report of National Centre for Education Statistics (NCES), the gender gap in science got narrowed down gradually with increasing age (NCES, 1997). Unfortunately, after two decades of the published NCES (1997) report, the gender gap in S&T subject of university level still persists (NCES, 2013).

Keeping in parity with the theme of 2020 International Women's Day—Keeping parity with the theme of 2020 International Women's Day—'Realizing Women's Rights' - in mind and soul, the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Damodardas Modi rallied around his inventive slogan, '*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*' for empowering girls and women in educational institutions. As per the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2019-20 report, in the past five years (2015-16 to 2019-20) there is a rise of 18.2% female participation in higher education.

Gender equality in science, technology and innovation was expected to enhance the recruitment process (European Commission, 2008) as it was a way to encourage scientific and technological eminence for women (genSET, 2011). Very recently, women have been inspired to study and rise in S&T (Corbett and Hill, 2015), yet the increase in the education achievement has not matched with the overall collective merit of women in this field. Among the college

students, 70% account for women and minorities but less than 45%, in S&T courses (Office of S&T Policy, 2016). Diversity in S&T contributes to productivity which in turn leads to innovation and success. Empowering young women through learning of scientific and technological career path poses significant differentiation between male and female participation through '*information for a choice*'. The use of information and technology has played a major role in changing the society at a very fast unprecedented pace. In 21st century, information technology has contributed to almost 40% representation of female and 60% of males in job placements. However, surveys have documented that only 20% of female students have computers.

Educational choices are increasingly determined by future employability. Rapid increase of technology and globalization, S&T subjects are being offered by females to secure their employability. The present paper aims to review the status of women in S&T, their contribution to nation and the subsequent government and corporate fellowships/scholarships offered in Academic Institutions, R&D Laboratories and S&T Organizations.

2. Perspective

Research has indicated that many women have rendered significant contribution in technology transfer, organizational and policy development. Women are performing social roles for effective use and management of natural resources. The natural environment for females somehow becomes non-familiarized with social constraints, thereby barring them in their implementation of various tasks and activities (Cummings et al., 2008). The presence of women in technology indicates the spread of wide variety of working style. Hence, organizations should make provision of opportunities to the individuals, best suited to them to achieve professional and personal goals. Women are generating keenness to acquire knowledge in digital technology. The use of digital skills and technologies not only empower them to choose science fields but also make them entrepreneurs.

3. Research methods

In order to have a comprehensive assessment of the performance and career attainment of women in science, following methodologies have been adopted.

- [1] Secondary data source information's were gathered for understanding the percentage enrolment of female students in colleges and universities,
- [2] Efforts have been made to document the historic achievements of major Indian Women Scientists since independence and

- [3] The records are being maintained to showcase the various Fellowship/ Scholarship schemes of Government and Corporate sectors, offered in recent times for empowering women in S&T.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Enrolment of female students in higher education

Quantitative analysis of socio-economic and demographic profile of women in science, education qualification, occupation and career track details, specific break in education and employment, work place academic and non-academic infrastructure and facilities, working environment and peer-group interaction helps us to understand intra-household sharing of responsibilities, dual role played by women in marriage and family care along with the achievement indicators such as publications, completed projects, awards etc. This analysis is focused on all India level for currently working women and students in science. Women enrolment in higher education has risen from <10% in 1947-48 to 48.6% in 2018-19. Female students have also increased significantly per 100 male students for Central Universities, Deemed Universities and Government-aided Institutions. However, this share is also approximately 30% to that of male students at Indian Institute of Technology and National Institute of Technology. In order to increase this percentage of females in S&T, super numerary seats

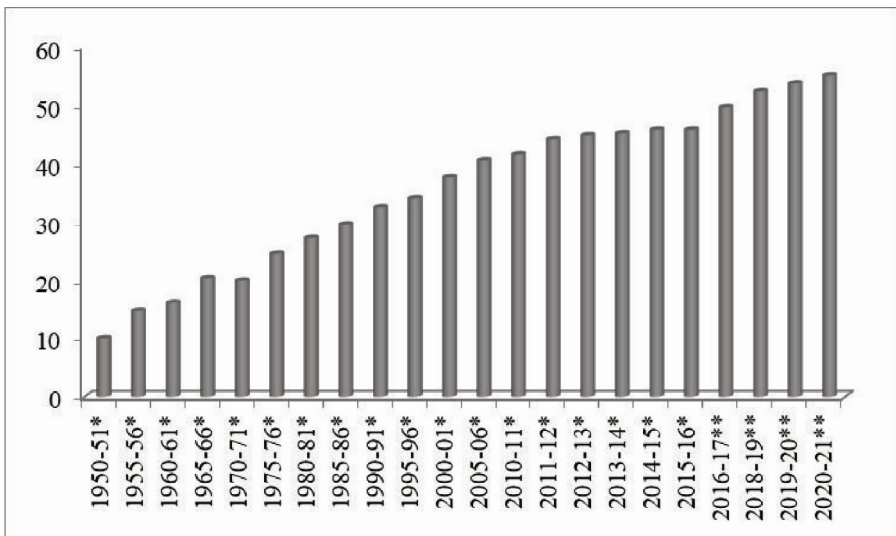


Fig. 1: Statistics of enrolled female students in Colleges and Universities.

Source: *Ghara, T. K. (2016); **<https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/enhancing-gender-equality-in-india-s-higher-education-opinion/story-CuQKOLDc4ujMGPScy4ejJI.html>

were created. Results showed that with this step, the enrolment of females grew in the order of 8% (2016-17) < 14% (2018-19) < 17% (2019-20) < 20% (2020-21). Similarly, the enrolment of female students into Ph.D. programs also increased by 43.8% in 2018-19 from that of 40% in 2013-14 (Fig 1).

The reason behind this increase was that women candidates were allowed a relaxation for 1 year for M.Phil, 2 years for Ph.D. in their maximum duration (i.e. 2-6 years). As per the UGC (2016) guidelines, in addition to the above-mentioned relaxation, women candidates are entitled for maternity/child care leave up to 240 days during the tenure of their research programme. Moreover, the opening of 16 Female-only Universities has risen the enrolment of females in S&T to 10.82%. The improvement of Gender Parity Index (GPI) from 0.92 in 2013-14 to 1.0 in 2018-19 is a clear reflection of the steps taken by the Government for empowering women in S&T (¹Data has been obtained from Hindustan Times, 6th March, 2020).

4.2. Women's contribution in science and technology

Female career developments in the field of S&T are characterized by a hierarchy where women are placed at the bottom and not involved in decision-making or leadership positions. Generally, women's professional life has been identified in two different effects: swivel doors and transparent boundaries. The former speaks of the high rates of women who are at par with men in different workplaces whereas the latter speaks of the constraints in her societal status which blocks her career (Suter, 2006). This includes biased recruitment and stereotyped life styles which often affect the emotional well-being of women (Sheridan, 1998; Corley et al., 2003; Schlesinger, 2016). Apart from the huddles in career profession, women have come forward in contributing to S&T, research and development for the progress of nation.

A list of women scientists since Indian independence as per NCSM (2000) is presented in Table 1. Fouad and Singh (2010) confirmed that work place climate and culture are the major drivers for rewarding the achievement of women. UNESCO (2007) stated intimidation or preferential attitude in working environment discourages women as per the norms of Equal Opportunities Commission (2004). According to the report of Niti Ayog, Government of India and Society for Socio-economic Studies and Services (SSESS, 2017), 82% of women have full time permanent job, 14% in fulltime contractual jobs and 4% in part-time jobs. Perceptions of women science professionals stated 42.5% women who have managed career attainments with family responsibilities, 32.1% stated they are adversely affected by the family, 16.7% received family household support, 5.8% have reported positive effects respectively. The report also stated 22% women opted for teaching, 7% academic administration, 4%

research support services, 66% in research and 1% in other responsibilities. In addition, 72.4% received membership of professional bodies, 72.1% received professional awards and 35.4% hold academic administration. Also, 28.9% visit abroad for short duration and 35.2% for long duration respectively.

4.3. Career advancement schemes in science and technology

The ultimate goal of career advancement lies in the principle of student recruitment, offering of fellowships and retention to prepare a successful career force. Many career options are advertised targeting women which are either government or corporate aided. Varied fellowships/ scholarships to pursue career in S&T are listed in Table 2. If the women students and scholars are made aware of the career options they will be motivated for scholastic achievement in courses related to S&T. At the end of the higher education, a supportive programme experience can help women for either private sector or government sector jobs. Adaption and execution of Women Component Plan, Formulation of Gender Specific Schemes, Constitution of Task Force, Gender Budgeting etc., are the various efforts made by DST of Government of India. Gender diversity would be reflected equally if women are placed in every work place (Bear and Woolley, 2011).

5. Conclusion

Women are now triggered by numerous curricular and co-curricular activities in S&T and hence they are now placed in a diversity of workplaces including information technology. However, barriers still exist for successful career entry. Despite these barriers, women faculty and researchers/scientists have reported the lack of mentoring and supportive policies. Hence, both students and faculties should be promoted in getting research grants and publish high impact factor researches in scientific journals which in turn provide overall support to institution research activities. Finally, gender sensitivity in S&T products (publications and patents) are the real dimension of gender gap that can help proposing effective policies.

Table 1: Indian women in science and technology since independence

Names	Specialization	Contribution to S & T
Dr. Kadambini (Basu) Ganguly	Medicine	She is known as the first physicians of South Asia who graduated during the British Empire.
Dr. Anandi Gopal Joshi	Western medicine	The first graduate from Women's Medical College in Philadelphia, USA in medicine.
Dr. Anna Mani	Solar radiation, ozone and wind energy measurements	Indian physicist and meteorologist who became the first Deputy Director General of the Indian Meteorological Department and was the recipient of K.R. Ramanathan Medal in 1987.
Ms. Rajeswari Chatterjee	Microwave Engineering and Antennae Engineering	The only woman Professor and Chairperson at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore in the Department of Electro-Communication Engineering.
Dr. Indira Hinduja	Gynaecologist, obstetrician and infertility specialist	The first Indian doctor to deliver test tube baby and pioneered the technique of Gamete Intra Fallopian Transfer (GIFT) and delivered GIFT baby first time on 4 January 1988.
Ms. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw	Biotechnology	The Chairman & Managing Director of Biocon Limited company, Bangalore who manufactured the world's first oral insulin.
Dr. Aditi Pant	Marine Sciences	The first lady for Antarctica Expedition in 1983-84 who was honored with the Antarctica Award along with Sudipta Sengupta, Jaya Naithani and Kanwal Vilku for their outstanding contribution to the Indian Antarctic programme.
Prof. Anjali Mookerjee	Environmental Science	Dean, School of Environment JNU who worked on New Radiation Biophysics.
Ms. Madhuri Mathur	Entrepreneur	She was the Director of Sivatosh Mukherjee Science Centre, Kolkata. Her innovation of Sumeet mixer grinder made her a dream for millions of Indian women.
Dr. Suman Sahai	Gene	Founder of Gene Campaign in India and promoted the farmers by her patent campaign for Neem and Turmeric.
Ms. Kalpana Chawla	Space Science	First Indian "Terrific astronaut" named by NASA who flew on Space Shuttle Columbia in 1997 as a mission specialist and primary robotic arm operator.
Ms. Sirisha Bandla	Space Science	Second woman who flew on the edge of space on billionaire Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic rocket plane.

Contd.

Ms. Sunita Lyn Williams	Space Science	A Padma Bhusan awardee, she is known as NASA Astronaut who fulfilled missions like STS-116/117 (Expedition 14/15), Soyuz TMA-05M (Expedition 32/33), Boeing Starliner-1
Dr. Soumya Swaminathan	Vaccine dosage in COVID-19	WHO's Chief Scientist who is working on pharmacovigilance system since 2019 with regulators and manufacturers and also with countries that have set up safety monitoring systems for constant reviewing the adverse events that are being reported into the system, doing the analysis, making correlations on whether this is just a chance event or whether it's actually related to the vaccine.
Ms. Sunita Narain	Environmental Science	A Padma-Shri Awardee, Environmentalist and political activist as well as a major proponent of the green concept of sustainable development. She is currently the Director-General for Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), New Delhi.
Ms. Sudha Murty	Entrepreneur	A Padma-Shri awardee, Indian Engineering teacher. She is also the Chairperson of the Infosys Foundation.
Ms. Kamala Pujari	Traditional Farmer	A tribal woman from Koraput in Odisha, India. She is known for promoting organic farming.
Ms. Tulasi Munda	Social Activist	A Padma-Shri Awardee, 2001 by Government of India from the Indian state of Odisha. Her contribution to spreading literacy among the impoverished adivasi peoples of Odisha is commendable.

Source: Report by NCSM: <https://ncsm.gov.in/indian-women-in-science-technology/>; <https://www.who.int/>; <https://www.infosys.com>; <https://www.cseindia.org/page/sunita-narain>; <https://www.indiatooday.in>

Table 2: List of Government and Corporate Fellowships/Scholarships for women in India

Name of the Grant	Granting Organization
Women Scientist Fellowship (WOS-A, WOS-B, WOS-C)	Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India
Savitribai Phule Scholarship – Award for Backward Girl Students of Maharashtra	Social Justice & Special Assistance Department, Government of Maharashtra
Indira Gandhi Scholarship for Single Girl Child:	University Grants Commission (for PG Programmes)
JBNSTS Scholarship	Bigyani Kanya Medha Britti Scholarship (JBNSTS), West Bengal 2018
Pragati Scholarship –Scheme to Girl Child (SSGC)	All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)
Muslim Nadar Girls Scholarship, Kerala	Department of Collegiate Education, Government of Kerala
Tata Housing Scholarships	Tata Housing Scholarships for Meritorious Girl Students 2018
Lady Meherbai D Tata Education Scholarship	Tata Education Scholarship 2018
Adobe Research Women-in-Technology Scholarship	Adobe Research
Glow and Lovely Scholarship	Glow and Lovely Career Foundation
Prabha Dutt Fellowship	Sanskriti Pratishtan
CBSE UDAAN	CBSE and Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India
Begum Hazrat Mahal National Scholarship	Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF), Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India
L'Oréal India For Young Women in Science Scholarship	L'Oréal India
Smt. Geeta Lochan Girl Child Scholarship Programme	Smt. Geeta Lochan Girl Child Scholarship Programme 2018
Dr. Reddy's Foundation Sashakt Scholarship	Dr Reddy's Foundation
Abhilasha Scholarship	EROS Group
CBSE Merit Scholarship Scheme for Single Girl Child	CBSE
Internshala Scholarship: Career Scholarship for Girls	Internshala Career Scholarship for Girls 2020
SOF Girl Child Scholarship Scheme	Science Olympiad Foundation
UGAM – Legrand Scholarship Program	Legrand India
Clinic Plus Scholarship	Hindustan Unilever Limited

Source: https://www.buddy4study.com/article/scholarships-for-indian-girls-and-women#1_Technip_India_Limited_Scholarship_Program

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10

Advertisements as Stories of Empowerment

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Abstract

While society is still on the patriarchal mind-set and the advertisements are created with the ultimate motive to generate profits, it's time to reflect on the depiction of gender stereotypes. Advertisements that portray individuals as objects and are not sensitive to gender identities should come under scrutiny. Women have penetrated all walks of life and challenged the traditional gender roles. Advertisements today portray the image of women in a gender equality dimension. This paper brings to scrutiny the gender equal portrayals and discusses advertisements as instruments of change and empowerment.

Keywords: Gender, Equality, Advertisements, Stereotypes

1. Introduction

Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the unfinished business of our time, and the greatest human rights challenge in our world, the then UN Secretary-General, Mr. António Guterres had stated. UN support for the rights of women began with the Organization's founding Charter. Among the purposes of the UN declared in Article 1 of its Charter is "*To achieve international co-operation ... in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion*".¹

¹<https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/gender-equality>

Gender is a social construct that has existed from time immemorial. While there are seminars and symposiums on Gender equality and Gender Equality, the time has come to ponder on why do we need such forums? Is it because there still exists wide gaps? Or has the concept of gender changed? Is gender a rigid concept or is it fluid?

Women have distinguished themselves in various walks of life, be it medicines, science, technology, politics, humanities social service. The list is not exhaustive. In the modern world, this paper looks at the dimensions and concept of gender. It looks as Advertisements and the portrayal of women from a gender perspective and a gendered lens. This paper throws light of some advertisements that have portrayed gender with positivity. The advertisements have challenged the age-old conventional mindsets.

Portrayal of women has been an area of interest for both academicians and industry people. The advertisement of a fairness cream or the celebrity girl on the two-wheeler questioning the rights of the boys to have all the fun or the newer advertisements where the father cooks dinner for the male friend of the daughter; the stereotypes have been reworked to break barriers. Women in the mythical ages were relegated to the position of goddesses but today we have come a long way.

Advertising is a form of business as well as an art. It is part of the marketing mix. Advertisements are instruments to persuade people to buy a product or a service. Advertisements are reflections of our cultural values. Money is pumped into advertisements so that the sponsors generate manifold profits. Advertisements have a larger than life in media markets. They mould public opinion and give us role models. As the advertisements are reflections of our culture it is very easy to castigate the advertisements that they show gender in a bad light. But there are many advertisements today that show the changing status of women in society. They also show the changing mindset of male counterparts with regards to respecting and supporting women. In the book, *Ogilvy on Advertising*, the author David Ogilvy writes in first person. In the first chapter titled *Overture*, he writes, I do not regard advertising as entertainment or an art form, but as a medium of information. When I write an advertisement, I don't want to tell you that you find it 'creative'. I want you to find it so interesting that you *buy the product* (David, 1983).

In the book, *Advertising basics*, 'a resource guide for beginners', the authors, Vilanilam and Varghese have discussed how advertizing began in the first chapter, entitles, how it all began. They write, Advertising is an organized method of communicating information about a product or service which a company or individual wants to sell to the people. It is a paid announcement that is conveyed

through words, pictures, music and action in a medium which is used by the prospective buyer. By itself, advertising cannot buy or sell: it can only guide the buyer and help the seller.

The advertiser approaches the prospective customers (also known as the target or target audience) through messages that are supposed to persuade them to buy the product or utilize the service that is advertised (Vilanilam, 2008)

Ruchi Gupta, in the book, *Advertising Principles and Practice* opines that the term advertising is derived from the Latin '*advertere*' which means to turn the attention. Advertising serves as an important promotional tool not only for manufacturers and traders but also holds substantial information for consumers and society at large.

Further, the author discusses the AIDA Model. She writes that the AIDA Model was presented by Elmo Lewis to explain how personal selling works. AIDA is an acronym for attention, interest, desire, action. The stages form a linear hierarchy (Ruchi, 2015)

We tend to get irritated when an ad comes in between our favorite serial. We feel that the ad is a disturbance. However, even though the objective of the advertisements is to persuade us to buy a product or avail a service, the advertisements are powerful instruments to convey messages within a short time frame of one or two minutes. They reflect where society stands today. They are not preachy. They convey messages in an entertaining mode. Many gender stereotypes are broken through reflections in advertisements. They touch a sensitive spot in our psyche. Some traditional gender roles are challenged and norms broken. They provoke us to question our ideas about gender equality and what can be started from the confines of our home up to the offices to the public sphere to bring a gender equal society.

Advertisements project the culture, life style, behavior codes and customs of society. Media is a factor that propagates values in society and advertisements are instruments that reflect the same. Advertisements are done with the aim to influence the buying behavior of customers and clients. Advertisements are part of the marketing mix. Our constitution enshrines equality for all our citizens irrespective of gender.

Let us also note that code of ethics for advertising dwell on the ethical and sober projection of women in advertisements and for protection of dignity of all genders. While there is no harm in projection of women as ones who share, who care, who nurture, they should not be used as objects to cater to the baser instincts with the sole purchase to influence buying behavior.

Today we cannot imagine a world without the all-pervasive advertisements. The hoardings on the roads, on highways, the electronic media the print media, the pop-ups on social media, all prod us to buy products and services. And most of the time, the common factor in the advertisement through all these are projection of women. But do all the advertisements project the women in a stereotypical manner. Or there are winds of change? Do they depict ads with an air of positivity?

Finally, personal speaks of portrayal of all as multidimensional, with their own depth of personality and agency.

1.1. A few advertisements that have made us reflect at gender in a positive light

A view at some advertisements that show that some advertisements in India have become instruments for promoting Gender Equality.

1. The advertisements of Ariel Matic Washing Powder for washing Machines. The video compels us to think on gender stereotyping and ponder on is laundry only a women job. It was a campaign on “Share The Load”. The ad depicted a young woman multitasking and juggling personal and professional life while at home. Her husband sat watching the television. The young women’s father was watching her daughter going around her job without complain. He tendered apology on his own and on behalf of all the fathers who had acted like the guy who watched television whole their wives slogged at home and in the office. He was a changed man as the viewed life from the perspective of a woman.
2. BIBA- Change the conversation: The advertisements featured a middle-aged man, his wife and the senior citizen mother of the man. The middle-aged couple had returned after discussing the impending marriage of his son with a young girl. While the aged senior citizen lady wanted to know how much dowry was fixed in the marriage to be held soon, her son replied that the dowry was fixed in lakhs of rupees, a car, gold, and Diamonds, but wait the boys side were giving the dowry and not the girls side as is the norm prevalent in society. He cited the reason was that they were getting a wonderful girl as their daughter-in-law and she was worth diamonds. All the conversation was done to break our stereotypical motions of a girl’s side, which were bound to pay dowry during marriage.

3. **HDFC BANK**

Make every day a Mother's Day- A young professional man gifts his mom a new Smartphone. She was used to her old phone. The son was elated that he had got an expensive gift for his mom but was not in a mood to explain her how to use the Smartphone especially for digital payments. He failed to spare a few moments for her in his busy schedule. The man's wife stepped in and explained to her husband the importance of appreciating a mom's world when her son was small, a mom did not hand over a pencil and paper to the son and completed her duty. She was patient with her efforts to help him write. The son was a changed person therefore; the message is let every day be a mom's day sensitivity is the key.

4. **Brooke Bond Red Labels: A Boy who Girls like**

4.1. **Un-stereotype**

The ad emphasizes the need to 'un-stereotype'. And it starts from our home the earlier the better. The ad film was conceptualized by Ogilvy. A small boy and a small girl are playing house- house while a voice over narrated the story. The small boy makes the tea, adds the sugar and hands over the cup to the girl. They both erupt into laughter and happiness and enjoy their tea. Making tea is not only a girl's job. A boy can learn to do that do. Gender roles should not be fixed in favor of boys and it's not the girl who will play with a toy tea, set and prepare and serve tea. Such gender stereotyping should not be carried into adult hood. Making tea will not make the small boy a girlish child. It will make him someone that girls will admire.

5. **Tanishq remarriage**

The advertisements featured a thirtyish woman who defied the usual fair colored women seen in ads. She is seen wearing beautiful jewelry set as she dresses up. We get to see a little girl getting excited to join in she happened to be the daughter of the woman. During the wedding, the bridegroom carries the stepdaughter on his shoulders and carries on with the rituals. We get to see many stereotypes getting broken. A dusky woman, either widowed or divorced and with a little daughter of her own getting married to a broad minded and loving man. He did not insist on a fair skinned or virgin to marry. What an evocative portrayal especially for a society like our own.

6. Mama's Boy by Star Plus TV channel launched an ad film where cricket heroes like Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane and MS Dhoni showed their mothers names at the back of their jerseys. The ad challenged the age old notion of getting our identity only by the name of our father. It respected the role of a mother in the upbringing of a child. It was part of Nayi Soch campaign.

7. A whisky brand ad depicted men gazing at a women. It showed the right of the men to do so and justified those men will be men. We may recoil in shock but if we look at the other way, the ad depicts men as weak creatures who drink and ogle. It showed men gazing at women and justified it with the tagline: Men will be men.

2. Objectives

- [1] The paper reports the concept of gender equality and gender stereotyping in advertisements.
- [2] Instruments of changes like advertisements are discussed.
- [3] The barriers in gender equality that need to be overcome are suggested.

3. Perspectives

This paper looks at Feminist Theory to analyze the patriarchal mindset in society and the resultant reflections in all manifestations, including mass media, in societies, men has traditionally been dominating while women have been pushed to the sidelines. The theory discussed the concept of Patriarchy².

Patriarchy refers to a set of institutional structures (like property rights, access to positions of power, relationship to sources of income) that are based on the belief that men and women are dichotomous and unequal categories. Key to patriarchy is what might be called the dominant gender ideology toward sexual differences: the assumption that physiological sex differences between males and females are related to differences in their character, behaviour, and ability (i.e., their gender).

These differences are used to justify a gendered division of social roles and inequality in access to rewards, positions of power and privilege. The same reflection can be witnessed in advertisements and the roles women and men play in the same. Despite the variations between different types of feminist approach, there are four characteristics that are common to the feminist perspective:

1. Gender is a central focus or subject matter of the perspective.
2. Gender relations are viewed as a problem: the site of social inequities, strains, and contradictions.
3. Gender relations are not immutable: they are sociological and historical in nature, subject to change and progress.

²<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/alamo-sociology/chapter/reading-feminist-theory>

4. Feminism is about an emancipatory commitment to change: the conditions of life that are oppressive for women need to be transformed.

The perspective of John Stuart Mill and his writing on **The Subjectification of Women** is also discussed as another perspective³. The 19th century British philosopher John Stuart Mill contribution is his call for legal and social equality for women in an 1861 volume entitled *The Subjectification of Women*⁴. Mill lived in an era when women lived in the shadow of their *de facto* masters, their husbands. The subordination of women, he argues, is not only “wrong in itself” but “one of the chief hindrances to human improvement.” By denying women the same opportunities as men, he says, society not only impedes the development of roughly half the population but denies itself the benefit of their talents. Why such a foolish practice is followed, Mill asks. Because, he says, our customs and laws are a carryover of the law of the strongest. The fact that men are typically superior to women in physical strength leads to the presumption that men are superior to women in all areas, despite the fact that there is no proof to support the claim.

4. Discussion

The advertisements have portrayed the gender roles in various lights. Sometimes humor as an appeal has been used. Celebrity factor has been used. The changing landscape of gender is reflected. With many characters shown belonging to young generation, the new world will hopefully bring in winds of change.

4.1. Some notes to discuss

4.1.1. Media: Media has a variety of roles and impacts and one of the foremost is its contribution to build a better society. There is practically no one today who does not spend time with media. No one can shy away from the proliferation of advertisements rough various media. Media advertisements on may be seen for a few seconds, but carry potential to influence our notion about gender and stereotypes. Body shaming, trolling, memes are perceptions we carry forward through media. With the bandwagon of empowered women, we have started to say no to the concept of Barbie doll image of beauty.

4.1.2. Informed Choices: Gender equality should enforce the concept that a society is just and fair when all sexes have equal opportunities and rights. All spheres of life like political, social and economic must provide equal avenues. From the media angle that would also mean equal access to information and knowledge. The right information and the access to media will give an individual awareness and this perspective will help to make informed choices.

³<https://wysu.org/content/commentary/john-stuart-mill-womens-rights>

4.1.3. *Feminism:* Feminism should be viewed in the context of gender equality. It is an extension of human rights. A feminist is not anti-men. If an advertisement portrays a woman in the kitchen that does not mean that a women should feel that it is demeaning to work in the kitchen. All work should be celebrated. The lady rustling up a meal in the kitchen for her family is no less than the corporate woman in a business suit making a PowerPoint Presentation. In fact, many women have extended their work in the kitchen to entrepreneurship and provided employment to many, including men. Marketers have started portraying advertisements to show the emergence of the new, empowered women. Hence, the ads elected for this paper have tried to highlight the current trend. It is left to our discretion to acknowledge the concept of gender equality in the ads as a purely commercial motive on the part of the marketers or look at the social concept in the ads.

4.1.4. *Gender representation in advertising and the impact:* As advertising has strong visual elements, it has a direct effect and a subconscious effect too. Media is after all a depiction of the going-ons in society. Advertisements depicted through media help us to judge and compare products and services. They have a socializing effect too. The advertisement a do influence but the final judgment is left to the viewers to accept the depiction of women in advertisements in a positive light and in an unbiased light. This is also particularly true for children and young adults. What they do, feel and carry a perception about gender roles are also influence by what they see in advertisements. If a woman chooses to be a homemaker, society should not demean her because a particular advertisement about a washing powder portrayed a woman as a banker.

4.1.5. *The concern:* Gender role stereotyping in advertisements and depiction of females through the media images is a concern of this paper. Advertisements should portray women in all categories of jobs. At one time it was unheard or women to be pilots on even join the defense services. Today a woman can be top official in the say, police services, while the husband can decide to stay at home and carry out the household work. He can choose to be the house-husband just a woman can choose to be a housewife. Advertisements should carry out such unheard of success stories from our country. Equal division of labor at home should form the basis of charity begins at home in advertisements.

4.1.6. *Objectification of women:* The female body should be viewed in a positive light. Objectification of women should not find its way in. advertisements. Advertisers should take care to stop ads that promote body shaming or dark complexion as barrier to marriage prospects. A certain ad about a perfume brand for men showed women flocking towards a man who had sprayed that particular perfume. Ads should shy stay away from such depiction of women as creature whose only job is to run after a man.

5. Conclusion

Advertising is a tool that can be used to promote gender equality. Even though advertisements are mostly paid for by the identified sponsors, the high visibility of the ads provides avenues for empowerment and change. It is heartening to note the tremendous potential of advertisements to create equal spaces for gender and evoke fairness and ethical principles. Countless progressive ads are coming with novel ideas and breaking grounds of conventions and traditions. Question arises here - whether these advertisements were created with an intention of social changes or attracting customers by adding these types of controversial ideas.

Culture has been reduced to a commodity. Objectification of women has been used to sell products. A women's body is shown to be a glamour doll. Gender stereotyping has catered to *Jo dikhta hai, wo bikta hai*. There will a difference between the reel image and the real image. Advertisers have catered to societal norms to sell product. A woman needs the money and approval of a male, especially her husband to buy a pressure cooker as reflected in the ad of Prestige pressure cooker. A woman will use a household appliance to cook food for the family and she is subject to the approval of a male who has the final authority to purchase a product and accord prestige to his wife. *Jo Biwi se karay pyaar, wo Prestige se kaise karay inkaar*, went the tagline. That made us ponder does a wife need the approval and sanction of a husband for everything? Why is it the husband who has the power to accord prestige for the wife and make the final purchasing decisions? He has the capacity to earn and is already endowed with prestige, so it seems.

Marketers with the sole motive of selling had reinforced the stereotypical roles of gender where woman was a saleable commodity. She had to fit in the role of a glamour doll on one hand or a docile housewife ready to serve her family, the Moov ad shows a woman with back pain unable to perform her household chores. When she was treated with the balm, Moov, she bounced back and started working again. Gender induced images and roles were the norm, but winds of change are in the offing. This paper has brought to the fore some ads with positive messages of gender equality. Gender equality is not the prerogative of the law maker or a particular gender. We all have our duty to contribute. Ads only project to show us a mirror of the happenings in society and set examples.

Advertisements transmit powerful messages to society. Companies, especially have launched ad campaigns that have challenged the stereotypical mindset prevalent in society. The ads have made us sit up and take notice. The new wave of advertisements have come like breathes of fresh air. The new wave of advertisements that have appeared in the markets are laudable for their

portrayal of gender in a positive light. The ads have become viral hits as they have been welcomed by the viewers. Advertisements are instruments of change in society and harbingers of gender equality.

Finally let us reflect on this quote by an academician and social worker, Brené Brown——

“It’s in our biology to trust what we see with our eyes. This makes living in a carefully edited, overproduced and photo shopped world very dangerous”.

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11

Tropes of Commercialization: Women in Indian Cinema

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Abstract

The advancing technology and communication has popularized the power of mass media. In the name of presenting complete social reality, mass media has presented only partial reality according to its convenience and profit scale. In spite of the fact that the form and content of mass media has changed over the years, yet, it has played a very determining role in the fortification of gender stereotype and patriarchal culture through new implications, and images by positioning an agenda for the public opinion through different standpoints and with selective subject matter. It is therefore, necessary to understand woman, their concerns and their representation in Indian cinema which is no longer invisible due to the mass media. It is interesting to note that old sex clichés have been represented in the mass media in new forms. Mass media having thoroughly commercialized has commodified women. Nevertheless, in order to institute the hegemony of dominant social classes, progressive discourse on women's issue is often remodeled in the mainstream discourse. Therefore, swapping the images of women is a very problematic aspect in respect of the increasing market economy.

Keywords: male gaze, commercialization, objectification, gender stereotype, women question, traditionalism, female sexuality, autonomy

1. Introduction

Throughout the last decade, Indian women have been continuously fighting for 33% reservation of seat in the Parliament. Women in politics as well as in other fields have an idea that this particular bill will empower them to contest at the

forefront and represent the feminine population with pronounced sensitivity and sensibility, particularly depicting the women question. With the occurrence of political events, the delineation of women in Indian cinema is a very crucial issue. Now that women have liberated themselves breaking all the conventions, having moved out of the threshold, into the world, and have created space for themselves, doesthen, the Indian film industry follow a similar pattern in representing women? Is the changing social trend reflected by the Indian films? These are certain pivotal questions worth investigating. In the opinion of Ganti, “Bombay film industry is a male-dominated industry. Women pursuing careers within the industry are primarily either actresses or playback singers. This trend has changed in recent years with women making their mark as choreographers, costume designers, editors and screenwriters but their numbers are still much smaller in comparison to their male counterparts. Very few women are lyricists or composers, while a handful of them have ventured into direction they have not achieved, the commercial success their male counterparts have” (Ganti, 2004).

Therefore, so far as the matter, to be behind the scenes is concerned, women are very rare in number. Working of women in the industry leads to gender biases towards them because the representation of women is decided on the basis of the male directors’ and male professionals’ desires. Hence, women’s worldview, insight, and subjective realities are thoroughly dismissed.

2. Analysis

On the whole, since the film industry is one of the chief modes of entertainment for a tremendously huge population, it is important to interrogate the ‘what’, ‘who’, and ‘why’ so far as the film industry as a construct is concerned. It is important to notice as discussed earlier that it is the director’s notions, beliefs, and attitude merged with the taste and desirability of the audience that becomes the deciding factor so far as, the kind of roles women ought to be playing onscreen is concerned. The agenda of each viewer as per his/ her desire for entertainment must be something that conforms to the socio-cultural framework and power struggle, i.e. the preference must be based on the existing system of beliefs, attitudes, and values. In the opinion of Little John and & Foss, *“it is only when inconsistencies arise in this system of beliefs, attitudes, and values, will there be dissatisfaction leading to change. As long as there is no inconsistency, a change in concept or perception is hard to arrive at”* (John and Foss, 2005).

This is something that satisfies the viewers, thereby, satisfying the film directors' meeting their profit margin in Indian Cinema. Therefore, the idea of change is of little importance. It is very difficult to break this ideology. Here, I would talk about a very revolutionary Canadian-Indian film maker Deepa Mehta whose films were debated a lot. The release of her films *Fire* (1996) and *Water* (2005) infuriated the public because the former represented a radical image of woman i.e. as lesbians that are completely unacceptable in conventional terms and the latter represents the transgression of widows in Hindu religion in 1940s which was then, a sheer insult to the religious ideology and an incorrect point politically. Both these films enraged the political parties and religious groups resulting in commotion in North India. *Fire* (1996) discusses a plot where two women heterosexually married into the same household become daughters-in-law. Because of their problematic marriage and lack of love, both these women compensate each other's pain through personal exchanges between themselves. They gradually had a sexual attraction towards each other and found the comfort and space which they lacked with their husbands. This idea of representing women as a lesbians infuriated the political parties and religious fanatics. They even threatened to kill the director. Subsequently, Bollywood industry banned the movie. Further, Mehta's film *Water* (2005) was terminated and kicked out even before its shooting in Banaras. State religious factions completely damaged the movie's set and kicked away the crew from the shooting location. *Water* had a plotline based on the 1940s pre-independent India while Gandhi's Satyagraha was a major colonial event in the British India. It was the time that did not witness widow re-marriage. Widows were exiled from their in-laws and parents to special widow homes since they were considered ill-fated and maledict. The story revolves around a child widow who is exiled to the widow home and learns a lot about life from another widow who is in her twenties. Here, the agenda of confinement and the negative imagery of women are called into question. The idea that the whole story is located on the banks of river Ganga which in other words, defiles the religious values of a particular geographical location is completely unacceptable. Therefore, the religious fanatics protested against the release of this film which resulted in riots and mutiny. The already controversial Deepa Mehta was provided with special security to shoot *Water* but having unable to shoot it in India; she filmed it in Sri Lanka. Why did these two films wreck havoc? Is it the consequence of determinism or free will? These are certain important ideas to be interrogated.

In light of the fact that Indian Cinema has a huge number of spectators, it therefore turns out to be the sturdy evocative medium of mass communication with pre-eminent cinematic representations. What does this evocative medium communicate to the masses through the many tales that films tell? How does it portray women and what sort of messages does it send to the audience? The

expression 'representation of women' ideally refers to both career women pursuing films off-screen and actresses onscreen. My paper would largely discuss the onscreen lead actresses. Nevertheless, off-screen is a reference to understand the work pattern within the film industry. In view of this, Butulia says,

“As women become more and more visible on the screen, however, it becomes important to ask what this visibility consists of. What are the sorts of roles women play? How are they projected? Do women actresses serve as models for Indian women? How far do their films reflect social attitudes towards them? How far do they shape such attitudes?” (Butulia, 1984).

The theoretical framework of my paper would be based on the evolution and the sustainability of the socio-cultural stereotypes within the Indian society that leads to the reiterative female stereotypes in Indian Cinema. So far as the Indian society is concerned, the patriarchal opinion of women has been so agreeable in the course of time for the division of labor and accountability of the tasks that, these classifications turned into a standard of living to great extent. As a result of which, it has become the foundational power structure of the society that cannot be easily vanquished. The power structure fortifies the clichés, and the clichés further fortify the power structure. Here, the moot questions are - Where do these stereotypes emerge from? What are the factors responsible for these stereotypes to have translated into the mega screen of commercial Indian Cinema?

So far as, the evolution of women's roles with regards to Indian Cinema is concerned, Laxmi states, “From the passive wife of Dadasaheb Phalke's *Raja Harishchandra* (1913) to the long suffering but heroic mother-figure of *Mother India* (1957) to the liberated single-parent of *Mother '98* (1999), it has been a rather long and challenging journey for women in Hindi cinema” (Laxmi, 1995). This gives a clear picture of the historicization of the changing roles of women in Indian Cinema. If the socio-cultural and historical factors of women's roles in Indian Cinema are discussed, then we can clearly notice the idea of women either being conditioned according to the social norms or being objectified. Therefore, it could be easily observed that Indian Cinema deals with social concerns with regards to women, but it fails to focus on women's viewpoint, and rather centralizes the male protagonists who resolve the disputes and tussle inside the films.

Indian film actresses begin their career in their teenage unlike their male counterparts who begin in early twenties. After a few years, these actresses are considered to be 'old faces' and rejected. But on the other hand, the male actors' career period never expires even if they turn 50. It is a very common point that an aged 50 years old male actor is also seen playing the male lead

with a 19 years old female actress. But at the same time, if a slightly older female actress is seen in the cast along with a younger male actor, she is criticized having lost her “youthful charm” (Ganti, 2004). Even the audiences desire for the same. Hence, this is a clear indication of male centralism and bias’ of both the film makers and spectators. This is also suggestive of the ‘male gaze’ that is an undercurrent both inside and outside the industry. With reference to this, Mulvey suggests,

“... the fascination of film is reinforced by pre-existing patterns of fascination already at work within the individual subject and the social formations that have molded him” (Mulvey,1975). It is important to understand the two different patterns, so far as representation of women in Indian Cinema is concerned. First category is the ‘stereotype’. In this regard, it has been always observed that the Hindi films cling on to the conventional patriarchal norms which believe that female sexuality is a threat to the male authority. It, therefore, suppression of women’s desires becomes the ultimatum.

“Women who are portrayed as per the norms of the traditional value system of society are shown as women who are rewarded while those characters in the story, who transgress the boundaries of traditionalism, are punished” (Gokulsing and Dissanayake, 2004). *“Women who are portrayed as per the norms of the traditional value system of society are shown as women who are rewarded while those characters in the story, who transgress the boundaries of traditionalism, are punished”* (Gokulsing and Dissanayake, 2004). On the same plane Davidson states, *“Few directors have possessed sufficient moral neutrality to treat centrally the sexually dynamic female without restoring to caricature or to a kind of implicitly self-pitying sentimentality... the flat characterization and mawkish moral slants make the central females seem like puppets, there to stir up sufficient melodrama to enable the filmmaker to make his moralistic points”* (Davidson, 1981). The theme of marriage and the familial roles of a typical Indian wife, mother, daughter, and daughter-in-law (within the confines of society) became the centre point of Indian Cinema. This particular ideology also sold very well in the market. The imposition of roles on women which are reflected in Cinema is the core factor of persuasion theory of alter-casting. This theory as discussed by Terry and Hogg (2000) implies the heavy social pressure on a person for the acceptance of a role. Alter-casting depicts the ‘force’ and conditioning the audience’s behaviour and acceptance towards a particular role. For example, the highest grossing films *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (1995) depicts the sacrifice of love that the younger generation do in order to satisfy the society i.e. represented by their families.

The next category is the popular representation of the 'anti-stereotype'. Women in this category are either represented as a vamp or a courtesan. In both the cases, they are considered to be unlike the ideal woman. This vamp stigma is represented as, "*She flouts tradition, seeks to imitate Western women... drinks, smokes, visits nightclubs, is quick to fall out of love... portrayed as a morally degraded person... unacceptable for her behaviour... punished for it*" (Gokulsing and Dissanayake, 2004). This particular stigma also seems to affect the careers of Indian film actresses. For example, we have the Anglo-Indian actress Helen Jairag Richardson who played the popular role of a cabaret dancer and a stripteaser in Indian Cinema.

Another representation of this anti-stereotype is the concept of the courtesan dancer. She is considered to be the 'breathing space' (respite) of the male lead. Her only job is to comfort men during emotional trauma. After his recovery, she is not required anymore and is suppose to be thrown. She has always been represented as 'the other' losing her own additional value. Ganti suggests that courtesans were the most progressive women who were well-equipped in poetry, literature, music and performing arts. Because of their skilled and charming conversational skills, they were patronized by the reigning elite. They had a thorough control over their bodies unlike the prostitutes, and engaged in monogamous physical relationships with their patrons. Nevertheless, the Britishers with an agenda to dislocate this reigning elite considered courtesans as a part of it, and with an intention to downsize their power and influence, begun using them as prostitutes for the British soldiers in India, stripping them off their socio-cultural status (Ganti, 2004). As an example, the character of 'Anarkali' in the movie *Mughal-E-Azam* (1960) is a classic representation of the stripped off status and emotions. In this light, Dwyer says, "*Film brings out themes that are popular in Hindi films... struggle between public duty and private desire... the self-sacrificing woman*" (Dwyer, 2005). In the blockbuster film *Sholay* (1975), Hema Malini is commercialized when she is made to wear revealing clothes and dance amidst the scopophilic gaze of the villains to save the hero's life. The roles of Hema Malini and Jaya in this film are suggestive of the difference between the heroine and the vamp, and reflect the Madonna and the whore complex operates in Indian society respectively. The objectification, sexuality, and psychological demarcation in the audience's minds could be clearly noticed as either moral or immoral. Actresses like Zeenat Aman in *Satyam Shivam Sundram* (1978), Parveen Babi in *Kranti* (1981) are clear representative of the erotic fashion.

A new kind of stereotype that developed later under the Western influence of the heroine and the vamp all rolled into one, which in turn, reflects the globalized objectification of women. They are called as the modern day Indian women

who satisfy the male fantasy by their own choice which sounds quite contradictory. They very conveniently bridge the gap between the ideas of Madonna and whore. For example, in the film *Tezaab* (1988), Madhuri Dixit is the heroine, but her costume is that of the 1970s vamps. The tribal costume, generally preferred for the cabaret dancers largely exposes women's bodies. For example, the short skirts, brief blouses, and veil-less upper torso are instances in this case which along with the camera angles intends to be advantageous to the male fantasy. In addition to this, the objectification of female lead actress through wet saree sequence, 'behind the bush' scene, the 'item numbers' depicting the erotic fashion of women dancing, largely markets the female bodies and caters to the male sexual desire. Bingham in this regard says, "*Women historically have not been encouraged to become such subjects, at least not of discourse that patriarchal society takes seriously. Women cannot be consistently posed as the objects of male looks and language and also be the subjects of their own stories*" (Bingham, 1999).

The issue is not whether women wearing revealing clothes is a matter of right or wrong but the point of focus is that, female have changed into nothing but hip shaking, boob thrusting dance. The female lead lacks substance and becomes sheer eye candy. With reference to this, an interesting pattern has been observed by Mulvey which she discusses in her appropriation to the psychoanalytic theory, "*... the way film reflects, reveals and even plays on the straight, socially established interpretation of sexual difference which controls images, erotic ways of looking and spectacle... Psychoanalytic theory thus appropriated here as a political weapon, demonstrating the way the unconscious of patriarchal society has structured film form. Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning... psychoanalytic theory as it now stands can at least advance our understanding of the status quo, of the patriarchal order in which we are caught...*" (Mulvey, 1975).

3. Conclusion

Female objectification is an inevitable part of Indian Cinema. Today, the outfits are largely westernized in order to portray their characters as western, modern women. This has proved nothing but has only changed the nature of female objectification. But so far as the agenda of Indian Cinema is concerned, it is fundamentally the same. In a way, Indian Cinema is also a mode of escapism, working as a catalyst for the male fantasy.

Another important point I would like to make here is that there are a number of films which possibly undercut the basis of my argument in this paper, but in my opinion those are only exceptions and not existing norms. Therefore, it is necessary to interrogate the subconsciously prevailing dominant norms or narratives rather than the anomalies, since that will strengthen the critical build-up within this monotonous model. It is possibly when women's point of view will be thought about more frequently than the present state by the story writers and directors; the libidinous and remorseless pattern of Indian commercial Cinema with a stereotypic agenda could be vanquished. With the course of time, this practice might enable a change in the taste of the audience, which will further lead to directors' conception of newer narratives. This in turn will enhance the standard of story-telling.

To conclude with, since Cinema is highly evocative, it is very important for this medium of communication to effectively project the ideas for the audience to introspect, and gain a true perception of reality.

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12

Women and Diasporas: Identity and Empowerment Paradigms

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Abstract

Women migration is on rise as we call nowadays as feminisation of migration there is more women migrating for several factors. Migration brings about positional change among the women at the same time a diasporic phenomenon is created. When women immigrate to a new place they create a new diasporic sphere. Women carry with them their culture patterns of life and create their own diversity, identity by intermingling with the diasporic community. When women move to different parts they get acculturated and multiculturalism is created and it brings about a sense of unity and creates way for their development. This paper highlights the fact about women from various conservative countries migrating to other countries and how this diasporic identity helps them to give away all their conservative attitudes and pave a way for their freedom and empowerment.

Keywords: Diaspora, Diversity, Empowerment, Feminisation, Identity, Migration, Multiculturalism, Women

1. Introduction

Migration has become a universal phenomenon all over the world and it has been an important factor in Social Change. Feminisation of migration here refers to women migration which is on rise. In the past 25 years there has been the entry of gender notions in the migration framework. Earlier Female Migration was not recognised, it was the migration by men which was visible, but with the changes of time, women migration came to the spotlight.¹ Since the 1960's, international migration became more gender sensitive incorporating the gender

experiences where women migrate and get a new diasporic identity with various transformations in their way of life particularly their habitual patterns of life. With the onset of globalisation there has been mobility of women in search of employment, some individually, some with their partners and some with their families looking for better employment opportunities and better life styles². The Globalization of Migration has created a novel way of looking into the world, with changes in the spread, intensity and distance of migration, When women migrate, they carry their culture, when they make a move, a new freedom from cultural specificities is reflected, women in diasporas come across different paradigms of discrimination and empowerment depending on the cultures they move to sometimes to regressive cultures or liberatory avenues, there is feminism as well as multiculturalism that's reflected.³ The International Organization of Migration (IOM) depicts migration as those descendants of migration whose identity has been shaped by their migration experience and background.⁴ When women migrate they create a community of their own with new trends in their personality and patterns of behaviour and the diasporic identity empowers them. Diasporas ⁵have been the markers of women's identity and ways of empowerment. The term Diasporas reflects the contemporary trends in globalisation and transnational cultures which contributes for a larger and diverse section of population.

2. Women in Migration and Diaspora Discourse

An estimated 1 billion people around the world are migrants, one in every seven people. Almost half of women globally are migrants, globally there has been 20 million immigrant women residing in the United States. The International labour organisation (ILO)⁶ data estimates that women are half of global migrant population but account for 70-80% of migrants in some countries and driven by several factors like education, marriage, skill, social status and many others. Gender relations has been a significant factor that determines the migration process, Marriage has been a biggest reason for women's migration but global estimation depicts women are on move, income pattern explains, where low income countries have largest number of migrants, according to census of India 2011⁷, there are 45.36 crore Indians (37%) are migrants out of which women constitute 70 percent of the internal migrant community which is significant part of change in migration history. With the emerging changes female migration is no more associational migrants but has been moved to the mainstream migrants contributing to the diasporic population. Diasporas being a global phenomenon with 215 million first generation migrants, with 40 percent more in 1990, according to The World economist Report.

According to a report by International Migrant Stock (2019), 17.5 million persons living abroad, or a strong Diasporas, India was the country with the origin of international migrants. The women have been the preserves of identity and carriers of culture which formed the diasporic base and multicultural phenomena. There have been various intricacies in gender and migration which has resulted in better implementation of policies for women and paved way for equitable social norms and women's rights and access to resources. Various data reveal that women are increasingly migrating on their own and growing faster in more countries than the male migration. It has improved autonomy and created a better space for women in society and by imbibing the diasporic cultures women have a new found autonomy with new norms, skills and expertise. Migration is a cause as well as consequence for female empowerment. Feminist epistemological studies have reflected the socio-cultural moorings of women's migration and formation of a multicultural diasporic community.

3. Women in Diaspora and Empowerment

Diasporic cultures exist around the world, the diffusion of cultures has contributed to the prevalence of a number of diasporic communities which hold and safeguard the links to the countries of origin and destination. As Migration created a larger and diverse diasporic community, where women became the bearers and transmitters of culture Women carry with them the culture and form an identity when they go to different places where their diasporic identity is mapped, as they move from the Indian patriarchal culture to different Gulf Countries or other places in search of employment they create a own diasporic world where there is an intermixture of different values and which helps them to have choice sin acceptance of values. They undergo a change in various ways like gender, norms, and renegotiate several gender roles and patriarchal notions, women in India has been a part of a highly skilled Diasporas and despite of continued difficulties and constraints the process of migration and resultant diasporic conditions offer new opportunities and financial independence with liberating notions and womanhood. The present context explored the development of women's agency and the way they create their space in the diasporic conditions with new avenues for culture and opportunities. From traditional to contemporary, from homeland to host land women have renovated themselves an created space and agency in the cultural arena with huge amounts to mobility and capacity building paving way for empowerment.

4. Women and Agency: The Diasporic Identity

In diasporic settings women traced an agency as Antony Giddens⁹, the English Sociologist describes as a continuous flow of conduct or stream of actual or

contemplated interventions in the on-going process of events in the world. Women's agency is how they build up structural attributes in building up of social relations. It refers to the capacity of women in making choices based on rationality, social competence and different arenas of action. As women have been fighting with oppression across time and space, the Diasporas with its various cultural elements have provided them with a new agency and identity which is very essential for their empowerment. The diversity around has built their capacity in their social and cultural world giving them more self-authorization and freedom. There have been various contemporary challenges to fit into the new dimension of life but eventually it has given independence to women. The rise of women citizenship and a multicultural diverse diasporic community has been an essential element for women's development. The Diasporic Identity has created solidarities and community buildings which is an important aspect in bringing social transformation. The diasporic networks established help in the formation of cultural and assimilationsist policies which help in the development process of the nation. Rise in cultural creativity and diasporic consciousness with the rise in diasporic media has empowered women with a new identity.

5. Conclusion

The modern Indian diasporas has been the resultant of huge form of migration from the subcontinent that began in the mid-nineteenth century and most important demographic dislocations of modern times and represents an important element of Indian culture as well as elevator for global identity Diasporas drive in for development and Women subject to movement have created their own diaspora. Diaspora means combination of women from different backgrounds creation of their own sphere. Women through diaspora create their own identity. Adoption of different cultural practices, behaviour has raised several questions among themselves and they themselves have been an important part in transforming themselves and paving way for their own empowerment. When women come in contact with communities of liberal cultures they try to question their own identity and bring about change in themselves that has been found in several women which pave their way for empowerment. So this migration, assimilation of culture and diasporas has created an empowerment paradigm among women. Women have set examples for other women by adopting different cultural practices and these acts as an empowerment paradigm for their own liberation and development.

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Emerging Health Issues of Elderly Women of India

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Abstract

In traditional Indian society, elderly women are treated as liability. With their growing age, their role in family decreases up to the negligible extent. It is when women need stronger security cover, instead their support infrastructure, emotional connects, and security cover gets thinner by every passing day. Their family members don't understand their own responsibilities towards old women and their presence in the family/society is often ignored, they invariably become redundant for all concerned. Many older women suffer destitution of loneliness and heartfelt sense of redundancy. At this juncture, they have no option but to adjust themselves in whatever circumstances. In these adverse circumstances, older women want to remain useful within the four walls of their own families till the last breath. For the sake of a peaceful and respectful life, they have to compromise with all odd situations and never complaint about anything. But now with fast growing elderly population, increased life expectancy and higher percentage of elderly women in Indian elderly population, issues concerning elderly women cannot be ignored any longer. With this backdrop attempt has been made in the present paper to study the various challenges faced by elderly women of India and to give special attention to this vulnerable section of society to reduce their vulnerability and to provide them all round support and cooperation

Keywords: Redundant, Opportunities, Security, Destitution, Compromise

1. Introduction

Population ageing is defined as the process by which the proportion of elderly persons in the population increases as a result of continuous decline in fertility and mortality over the years. In 1990, the proportion of population over 60

years of age was only 6.8%, which is likely to increase to 20.1% by 2050. Moreover, the oldest old (80 years and over) is also expected to increase to 3.1% in 2050 from about 0.4% in 1990. In absolute terms the elderly population in India 60% will increase from 76% million on 2050, almost an eightfold increase.

India is one of the few countries in the world where males outnumber the females whose life expectancy at 60 and 70 is slightly higher than that of males elderly women are more dependent on family members for support due to substantive differences in the ages of women and men, differential life expectancy between males and females, differing proportion of elderly men and women who remarry (Gulati and Rajan, 1999).

Aging is considered as a very serious problem, while children pass out the stage of dependency with an alarming speed, the aged become increasingly dependent on others. It is generally believed that elderly women are helpless, isolated, ignored, physically weak, disengaged from active work and economically dependent. Serious concern has also been shown for the gradually rising proportion of such people in total population. According to UNESCO estimates, the number of elderly population in the world, above 60, is likely to go up from 350 million in 1975 to 590 million in 2005 and 1120 million in 2025 AD. About half of them live in developing countries. In India, there were about two million elderly persons in 1981 (Daka and Sharma, 1991).

In India, the elderly population will increase from 76.7 million in 2000 to 302.5 million in 2050, a fourfold increase. In China the elderly population will increase from 130.8 million in 2000 to 391.5 million during the period 2000-50. The absolute increase will be less marked in the more developed regions, where the number of elderly persons is projected to rise from 232 million in 2000 to 394 million in 2050.

The very old (80+) population will be the fastest growing segment of the population. Their numbers in the world will increase from 69 million in 2000 to 377 million in 2050, a more than fivefold increase. In 2000, China had the largest number of persons aged 80 years and over (11.4 million) and India with 6.1 million came third after USA. The number of very old persons in 2050 in China and India is expected to reach 98 million and 47 million respectively. The number of older persons declines rapidly as the age increases. The octogenarians (80-89) will outnumber the nonagenarians (90-99) by a large margin. At the same time, the rate of increase in the number of nonagenarians will be greater than the rate of increase in the number of octogenarians.

1.1. Trends in ageing in India

The elderly population (60+) in India is growing at a considerably faster rate than the total population. While the annual growth rate of total population had declined from 2.0 per cent during the 1940s to 1.5 per cent in 2000-05 and is projected to decline further to 0.4 per cent during 2045-50, the growth rate of the elderly population will increase until 2030 before declining. In absolute terms the number of elderly persons (60+) in India has increased 3.8 times over the last 50 years and is expected to increase 4.2 times during the next 50 years to touch 324 million by year 2050.

In relative terms the proportion of population 60 years and above had increased from 5.6 per cent in 1950 to 7.6 per cent in 2000 and is projected to increase almost three times to 20.6 per cent in 2050. For the (80+) age group, the increase in proportions will be even greater and it is estimated that the growth could be as much as five times during the next half century. Nearly the same pattern of increase is observed for males and females. As in the case of other developing countries the change in age distribution had been slow in the past, but it is expected to accelerate during the next half century. The median age of India's population which has been around 20 years during the sixties and seventies increased slightly to 23.7 in 2000 and it is projected to increase to 38 years in 2050.

An important feature of the ageing process is the ageing of the older population itself. The population 80 years and over is currently 0.6 per cent of the population. This proportion is projected to increase to 3.1 percent by 2050. The average annual growth rate of person aged 80 years and over during 2000-05 is 4.7 per cent as against a growth rate of 2.7 per cent for 60 years and over. In 2050, the growth rate of the 80+ age group is likely to be 3.5 per cent; while the growth rate of the 80+ age group is likely to be 3.5 per cent; while the growth rates of the (60+) age group is likely to be 2.2 per cent.

In 2000, India about 6 million very old (80+) persons and occupied the third place (after China and USA) for the number of very old persons. By 2050, the number will increase to 48 million and India will move to the second position (after China and USA) for the number of very old persons. By 2050, the number will increase to 48 million and India will move to the second position (after China). The number of centenarians in India is currently about 3200, but the number is expected to increase to 1.41,600 by 2050.

The femininity ratio for the age group (60+) is projected to increase only slightly from 109 percent in 2000 to 110 in 2050. However, the femininity ratio for the age group (80+) will increase from 122 in 2000 to 140 in 2025 and marginally decline to 136 in 2050. By the end of the century, older woman will greatly

outnumber older men, and this will be more so in the oldest old population. The “feminization of ageing” has great implications for social security in old age.

Ageing is the result of the demographic transition in which both mortality and fertility decline from higher to lower levels (Table 1). Table 1 presents the trends in fertility and mortality for the period up to 2000 and the projected trends up to 2050.

Table 1: Trends in fertility and mortality in India.

Period	Total fertility rate	Life expectancy at Birth
1950-55	5.97	38.7
1960-65	5.81	45.5
1970-75	5.43	50.3
1980-85	4.48	54.9
1990-95	3.6	59.9
1995-2000	3.48	62.1
2000-2005	3.01	63.9
2010-15	2.46	66.3
2020-25	2.14	67.8
2030-35	1.92	70.0
2040-45	1.85	72.6

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2002 Revision, Vol. 1, Comprehensive Tables, New York, 2003.

The total fertility rate of India had declined from 6 in 1950 to 3 in 2000 and is expected to decline further to 2.1 in 2025-30. In India fertility decline had started later than in several developing countries such as China, and is proceeding at a slower pace. At the same time the expectancy of life at birth for both sexes had increased from 38.7 years in 1950-55 to 64.2 years in 2000-05 or at the rate of over half year per year. It is expected to increase further to 75.4 years at the end of the century at the rate of 0.25 years per year. In other words the annual increase in life expectancy during the next half century is likely to be slower than the increase during the last half century.

Under the conditions of mortality of the period 2000-05, 64.2 per cent of the new born are expected to survive to 60 years and 27.8 per cent will survive to 80 years. Under the projected conditions of mortality for the period 2045-50, around 75.4 per cent of the new born will survive to age 60 and 48.4 per cent will survive to 80 years of age. There is thus a shift in the survival curve towards older ages. Those surviving to old age are also tending to live longer. The average expectancy of life in India at age 80 is expected to be 7.7 years in 2045-50, which is an increase of 24 per cent in the next half century. This is in contrast to the anticipated increase of 22 per cent for age 60 and 17 per cent at birth.

1.2. Aged in traditional set up

India is a land where the elderly women have been traditionally enjoying a place of honour, respect and power as prescribed by religious texts and social values and norms. The sons are expected to look after the parents. The failure to do so earns people social stigma.

The important role played by elderly women is not confined only to ceremonial occasions; they actively participate in familial and community life too. Their power and status in the family are reinforced by their rights over the ownership of the means of production and property. As they grow older they tend to withdraw from their day to day affairs depending upon their state of health and availability /willingness of other members in the family to discharge their responsibilities. The transition from active work participation to the role less status has so far been voluntary and smooth.

2. Effects of recent changes

However the recent changes in the society particularly those resulting from rapid industrialization, urbanization, western education and migration have caused stress and strain on the aged in varying degrees which have tended to increase the vulnerability of the aged.

The traditional Kinship and family organization is being replaced by nuclear family norms. The people are increasingly becoming more materialistic and individualistic in their orientations. They are no longer able to maintain the same relationship with the elderly members as they did in the past because of several social and economic circumstances. The shortage of housing accommodation in the cities, high rents and limited earning, and host of other factors compel young members of the family to leave the parents in the villages without any care. The increasing employment of women in cities in office and factories led them to spend much less time on the care of the elderly members. The high cost involved in the upbringing of children and education, and need to maintain a reasonable level of leaving offer disincentives to look after the aged properly.

3. Objectives

In this paper attempt has been made to address the health consequences of the elderly women of India and its implications for policy.

4. Discussion

4.1. Health consequences of elderly women of India

India is a developing country and the number of aged persons is bound to increase with better health and medical facilities, control of communicable diseases,

reduction in death rate and decrease in birth rate. In spite of all these developments the population growth in India is not expected to decrease much in case of substantial decrease in growth the proportion of aged to total population would increase.

Aging people require a wide range of preventive, curative and rehabilitative care. They have special needs in nutrition, in hygiene in exercise and in immunization. Housing transport and personal security should be adopted to their particular needs. (Sethi, Sharma and Salilesh, 1991).

4.2. Health of the elderly

Mortality and morbidity statistics in India are inadequate to draw any definitive conclusions about the health situation of the elderly population. Only a third of the deaths are registered, and the extent of registration varies in different areas of the country. Medical certification of causes of deaths covers the deaths occurring in the district and teaching hospitals in the country but the coverage is less than ten per cent of the registered deaths in most states. The medically certified deaths are recorded for 17 broad cause groups, but regrettably the data are not classified by age groups to enable analysis of causes of deaths among the elderly population (Table 2).

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Deaths for Persons Over 60 Years by Cause (top nine only) Rural India and Kerala. 1995

Cause of Death	India (percentage)	Kerala (percentage)
Bronchitis and Asthma	38.4	23.2
Heart Attack	19.6	32.2
TB of Lungs	8.7	2.3
Pneumonia	1.4	1.5
Cancer	10.5	12.3
Paralysis	12.5	24.9
Anaemia	6.2	1.8
Vehicular accidents	1.9	1.5
Suicide	0.8	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Derived from Tables 19-28 of RG I, Survey of Causes of Death, Rural, India. Annual Report. 1995, New Delhi.

Another source of information is the Annual Survey of Causes of Deaths in rural areas carried out by the Registrar General of India. The annual publication provides the distribution of the deaths due to major causes according to age groups. The data requires considerable manipulation to obtain the distribution by cause of deaths. Table 2 provides a comparison of the cause of death

distribution for India and Kerala for the year 1995, to provide an idea of the changing structure of causes of death as a result of the ageing process. This table shows that a state like Kerala with a more advanced ageing has relatively greater proportion of deaths from heart attacks, paralysis and cancer and relatively less proportion of deaths from respiratory ailments. Based on a comparison of the spectrum of causes of deaths in India with the countries like China and Japan, it may be expected that the non-communicable and metabolic diseases will increase with the ageing process in India (Vaidyanathan, 2006).

4.3. Disabilities of the elderly

The census 2011 highlighted that elderly (60+ years) disabled constituted 21% of the total disabled at all India level (Fig 1). It also provides valuable information on the disabilities among the elderly according to type of disability (Fig 2). According to Figure 2 out of the total disabled in the age group 0-19 years, 20% are having disability in hearing followed by 18% with disability in seeing. 9% has multiple disabilities. Among the disabled in the age group 20-39 years, 22% are having disability in movement and 18% has disability in hearing. 6% has multiple disabilities. Among the disabled in the age group 40-59 years, 23% are having disability in movement and 19% has disability in seeing. 5% has multiple disabilities. Among the elderly disabled persons, the disabilities in movement (25%), in seeing (25%) and hearing (12%) are prominent. 12% has multiple disabilities.

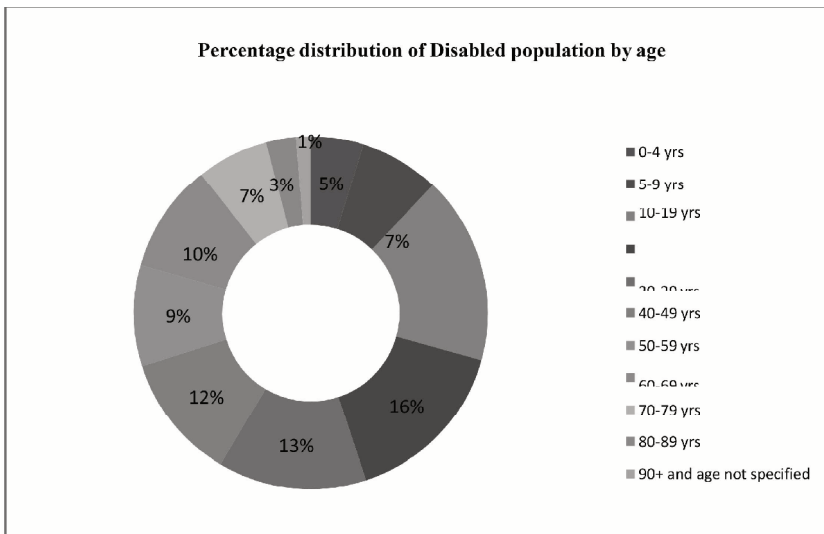


Fig. 1: Elderly (60+ years) disabled constituted 21% of the total disabled at all India level.

Source: Derived from Disabled persons in India, A statistical profile 2016, Social Statistical Division, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, GOI, <http://www.mospi.gov.in>

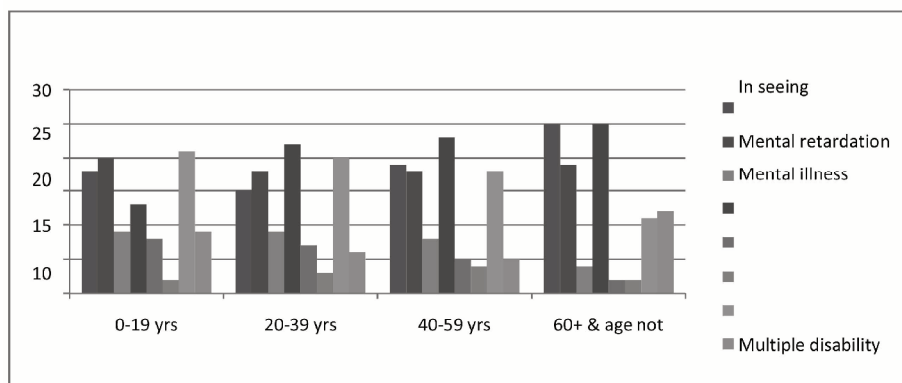


Fig. 2: Distribution of disabled persons by age group by type of disability(%) in India-Census,2011.

Source: Derived from Disabled persons in India, A statistical profile 2016, Social Statistical Division, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, GOI, <http://www.mospi.gov.in>

The National Sample Survey provides some interesting information on the ability of the disabled elderly to carry on their lives independently or otherwise (Table 3). Nearly one-fifth of the disabled elderly cannot take self-care even with aids and appliances, and these are the most vulnerable among the elderly population.

Table 3: Percentage of Physically Disabled Persons 60 Years and Above by the Extent of Physical Disability, Rural and Urban, 2002

Extent of Physical Disability	Rural Males	Rural Females	Urban Males	Urban Females
Cannot take self-care even with aid/appliances	17.7	20.8	17.5	21.8
Can take care with aid/appliances	29.1	23.4	28.6	26.2
Can take care without aid/appliances	43.6	44.7	48.0	45.3
Aid/appliances not available	9.4	11.0	5.8	6.3
Not Reported	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: National Sample Survey Report No 485, Disabled Persons in India, July - December 02.

4.2. Economic consequences of ageing

The decline in fertility and mortality will result in an increase in Elderly Dependency Ratios (EDRs). In India the EDR is likely to increase from 6 per cent in the year 2000 to 22 per cent in 2050. The Elderly Dependency Ratio is the ratio of the elderly population 65 years and over and 80 years and over expressed as a percentage of population aged 15-64 years. It will increase even more in China and more developed regions, but this is no consolation for

us. What this implies is that more and more elderly will need public support, since there will be fewer sons and daughters who could support them.

Another aspect of the ageing of population is that it is taking place alongside the epidemiological transition in the country as reflected in the changing pattern of causes of death. There will be a decline in the share of communicable diseases as we move from the nascent stage of ageing to an advanced stage of ageing. The relative share of infectious and parasitic diseases will decline and the relative share of non-communicable diseases will increase. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like malignant neoplasm, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases and nutritional and endocrinal disorders will increase with the ageing of population. As a result of the shift towards chronic and degenerative diseases, there is a greater risk of disabilities among the elderly. Even as countries like India are struggling with infectious diseases, malnutrition and complications from childbirth, they are faced with the rapid growth of NCDs. The shift from communicable to non-communicable diseases will escalate as the ageing process continues, and by the year 2020, the NCDs will constitute three-fourths of the burden of diseases. This “double burden” of disease is causing great strains to the already scarce resources of the developing countries. The expenditure for treating chronic ailments is far greater than treating the traditional ailments.

The extended longevity of the elderly will comprise of years with chronic illnesses, the most common ailments being cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, diabetes, visual and hearing impairment, mental illnesses etc. According to WHO estimates of Healthy Life Expectancy (HALE), 10 to 15 per cent of expectancy of life is lost in illness and disability (WHO, 2004). The elderly will have to cope with higher health expenditures alongside a fall in productivity. Presently, very few elderly are able to avail health insurance, and public health institutions are poorly equipped and poorly run, with the result that they are not suitable for providing the services required by the elderly. At the same time employment opportunities for the elderly is practically non-existent in India.

Less than 2 per cent of the older persons in India have old-age pension, provident fund or other benefits. Our health care system is unable to cope with even traditional ailments and health insurance system hardly covers a negligible proportion of population. At the same time, the number of elderly persons is increasing and the burden of dependency is also increasing. The number of elderly persons living alone in their homes and without support is increasing as a result of the breakdown in the joint-family system and the migration of our young ones to greener pastures elsewhere. In all our cities the number of old-age homes is increasing and many of them are commercial ventures lacking even basic amenities.

Geriatric care is lacking in government hospitals and primary health centres, and is available at very high cost only in multi-specialty hospitals. Home and community based programmes for the elderly is practically non-existent in India. In India, most elderly persons are cared in their own homes by their kith and kin. However, with urbanization and industrialization and the break-up of the joint-family system, more and more elderly will be in need of public support systems. The mushrooming of “old-age homes” and the increase in the number of cases in family courts seeking support of their sons and daughters is an indication of the growing need for a public support system for the elderly in India.

Since women tend to live longer than men do, the number of women do surpass men among the elderly, often referred to as “feminization” of the ageing process. They are also likely to be more vulnerable to illnesses during old age. Women have special health needs arising from their role as mother, and caregiver to the family. Women’s traditional roles as care givers may also contribute to their increased poverty and dependency during older age.

It is not uncommon that women give up paid employment to fulfil their care giving responsibilities. Others never had access to paid employment because they were looking after their husband, children or old parents. Because of cultural reasons many of the elderly women are widows who depend upon their sons or daughters for support. Census and survey data clearly indicate higher level of illiteracy among elderly women than among elderly men, and poverty levels are also greater among elderly women. In a recent paper Ashish Bose argues that increased life expectancy does not automatically lead to a better quality of life for the elderly, especially the women (Bose, 2008)

5. Conclusion

WHO has been advocating a policy of “active ageing”, where active ageing is defined as the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age (WHO, 2002). The active ageing approach provides a framework for the development of global, national and local strategies on population ageing. Active ageing applies to both individuals and population groups enabling them to realize their full potential for physical, social and mental well-being throughout their life time according to their needs, desires and capacities. At the same time they should be provided adequate protection, security and care when assistance is needed. WHO recommendations include policy proposals in the areas of: (1) health, (2) participation, and (3) security.

The proposals for health include reduction of risk factors and enhancing protection through access to health care where and when required. The proposals for participation include opportunities for employment, education and social, cultural and religious activities in order to make a productive contribution in paid and unpaid activities as they age. The proposals for security include protection, security and care in the event they are not able to support and protect themselves. Since public support systems are inadequate, families and communities should be encouraged to provide care for their older members. Older persons should be viewed as a resource and not a burden or a welfare recipient.

Regrettably, the issue of ageing of population has not received due attention in India in the past. The Tenth Five-Year Plan document hardly mentions the issue of ageing. There is only a small section in the plan document about pensions for destitute (Planning Commission, 2002). The same has been the case with the Annual Reports of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, The Ministry's website has two small sections on the National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) and the Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP). The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (2007) which was passed by Parliament last year is a step in the right direction. This Act makes it obligatory for an adult child or grandchild to maintain elderly parents and enable them to lead a normal life. The Act also provides for a maintenance amount of a maximum of Rs 10,000 per month that children are liable to pay in case they neglect their parents (senior citizens). It remains to be seen how this legislation will be implemented.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment of the Government of India is the nodal agency vested with the responsibility of implementing the National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP), the Integrated Programmes for Older Persons (IPOP) and the legislation mentioned above. This Ministry is almost entirely occupied with the issues of quotas for SCs, STs and OBCs, and there is a neglect of all other issues including issues of the elderly. The establishment of a separate Ministry for Senior Citizens Welfare could contribute to a positive and dynamic approach to ageing. Moreover, the institutional infrastructure for the support of the elderly at the state, district and local levels is currently non-existent except perhaps some non-governmental organizations.

There is an urgent need to establish the councils, geriatric institutions, ambulatory services for the sick, etc., at the state, district and local community levels. There should be a thorough review of the existing laws and schemes for older persons and the anomalies and inconsistencies should be removed. The laws and regulations governing life insurance and health insurance need to be adapted to the internationally acclaimed best practices. Institutions for the aged such as

the old-age homes and geriatric institutions should be regulated and monitored to prevent exploitation of the elderly and their supporters. Universities and academic research institutions should undertake operations and evaluative research on social security issues resulting from ageing of population.

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14

Condition of Women Working in the Unorganized Sector: An Analysis

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Abstract

In India, women constitute nearly half of the total population and they play a vital role in the domestic sphere, in the rural field and also in an urban economy. The Unorganised Sector is the largest employer of relatively unskilled workers when skill based Technological Changes in production of manufactured commodities and services have always facilitated income and employment growth for the highly skilled. Due to globalization the scenario among women has been changing as the formal sector is shrinking and unable to provide employment opportunities to the growing population. The informal sector has an important role to play. This analysis is based on a study which is rather descriptive in nature and totally based on secondary data. Not a lot of women are able to reach leadership roles, because of the gender stereotypes that persist in society and lack of infrastructure has traditionally side-lined women from core manufacturing functions.

1. Introduction

The unorganized sector is characterized by its vastness and heterogeneity. It becomes increasingly difficult to extend best of legal services to the entire women labour force concerning their safety and security, because of such a complex composition. To ensure proper protection of women at the workplace, there is a need to develop a more practical and meaningful mechanism for better implementation of the Act.

The law on the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace views the issue of sexual harassment at the workplace as a 'women's issue' and not as a labour issue which can be considered as one of the biggest flaws of the act.

Secondly, it would be safe to say that although the said Act has been implemented by States but it isn't able to fulfil its objective of preventing sexual harassment at workplace in the unorganized sector and essentially providing women with a grievances redressed mechanism which still has not yet been fully actualized. With a change of approach towards the issue, streamlining the provisions of the domestic legislation with international standards and vigorous efforts of publishing the provisions of law, the women working in the unorganized sector stand a chance of realizing their right to work in a safe environment.

Sexual Harassment of women at workplace is considered as a violation of women's right to equality, life and liberty. This leads to a sense of insecurity and hostility in the workplace which discourages participation by women in work, which in turn affects the social and economic empowerment of women and also the comprehensive goal of inclusive growth.

Hon'ble Supreme Court in the Vishaka Vs State of Rajasthan case was first to observe the need of this legislation. The power available under Article 32 of the Constitution was exercised by the Supreme Court because of the absence of any special law at the time and procedural guidelines were framed to be followed at all workplaces and institutions. The Supreme Court incorporated the basic principles of human rights enshrined in Indian Constitution under Article 14, 15, 19(1) (g) and 21 and provisions of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was ratified in 1992 by the Government of India.

The Indian Parliament, ultimately after 16 long years of Vishaka Case, passed a special legislation namely Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013) for the protection of women and their human dignity at workplace. The Act seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at workplace and to create an enabling and conducive working environment for women and it is applicable to all working establishments of both organized and unorganized sectors.

The said Act recognizes that every woman has a right to a safe and secure working environment, free from hostility and humiliation irrespective of age and employment status and if it is violated the women can file complaints invoking the relevant provisions of the law. Women working in all capacities are covered under this law, regardless of whether that may be regular, temporary adhoc or on a daily wage basis. Before the International Labour Organization (ILO) which recently adopted a landmark treaty in 2019, namely 'The Violence and Harassment Convention' that put forward the concept of 'world of work' and set global standards of response to violence and harassment at workplaces, there was no international legal instrument specifically dealing with violence and harassment at the workplace.

The unorganized labour sector has not reaped the legal benefits of the Sexual Harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013) even after seven years of implementation in our country. The lack of transparency by the government in terms of publication of data or information on the functioning or effectiveness of Local Committees that are responsible for dealing with sexual harassment complaints in the unorganized sector is also concerning. In case of the unorganized sectors where a large number of women have been working to earn their livelihood, the act has not been properly implemented. This is due to a dearth of implementation infrastructure, lack of awareness and apathetic attitude among the stakeholders.

In this connection, we need to define the term ‘unorganized sector’ as per the provision of the Act. Section-2(p) of the Act defines the ‘unorganized sector’ as a workplace where an enterprise is owned by individuals or self-employed workers and is engaged in production or sale of goods or providing service of any kind whatsoever, where the number of workers employed by such enterprise is less than ten. Before discussing the status of implementation of the said Act in the unorganized work sector, let us focus briefly on the scenario of the unorganized work sector, where women are working and contributing to the work of nation building.

2. Objectives

This proposed study would be based on the following objectives:

- To study women participation and role working in the unorganized sector.
- To know and understand problems and challenges faced by women working in the unorganized sector.
- To highlight the legal measures and schemes initiated for empowering women.

3. Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature and totally based on secondary data. The data has been collected and reviewed from various reports, journals and official websites.

4. Perspectives

4.1. The ‘invisible’ workforce: Women in unorganized sector

The female labour force participation has observed a decline in India from 34% in 2006 to 24.8% in 2020. A study done by UNGC (United Nations Global

Compact) reveals that India is the only country among the 153 surveyed countries where the economic gender gap is larger than the political gap. Not a lot of women are able to reach leadership roles, because of the gender stereotypes that persist in society and lack of infrastructure has traditionally side-lined women from core manufacturing functions the study remarked. Policies and procedures should be customized by companies, especially multinationals or private small-scale companies in order to adapt to the various life changes in their employees including maternity benefits, changing care needs, dual career couple and continuity.

Only 9% women are in organized sectors, government jobs or public sector with job security as most of the employed women in India are in the unorganized sectors e.g.- agriculture, forestry, fisheries, horticulture, masons, daily labourers, domestic workers etc. Unfortunately, gender mainstreaming is lacking in women's projects. And policy makers are unable to understand the significance of the gender perspective as integral to activities across all programs and projects. In all working institutions gender perspective should remain the locus of all policy, planning, development, research and advocacy.

Implementation and monitoring of norms and standards of planning, implementation and monitoring

The rise in GDP results in increasing gender parity in terms of falling fertility rate and higher educational attainment among women of our country. India's FLAP continues to fall. Women are the worst hit by India's unemployment crisis in the organized sector according to a report of 2019 by Google and Brain Company. Regardless of whether they are single or married, women, in India, are often required to prioritize domestic work due to the cultural and societal expectations from women as caregivers. On an average, Indian women perform nearly 6 hours of unpaid work each. Feminist economists have long debated on the definition of what constitutes "work" and invisibility of women's household labour. Social stigma against women working outside the house, especially for those who can afford not to work, continues to influence women's presence in labour market.

Well-meaning but discriminatory government policies, like the Maternity Benefits Act, 2017 are also something Indian women struggle with. Women are also not allowed to work in any factory overnight in view of Section-66(1) (b) of the Factory Act, 1948 specifically stating that women can only work in a factory between 6 AM to 7 PM but in multinational companies they may continue to work in the night shift. NCRB and other studies have shown that violence against women in public places, particularly the risk of sexual assault and unsafe environment discourage Indian women from entering labour market. In a country

ravaged by high rates of violence against women, these states will no longer hold companies accountable for providing safety like transportation for night shift, nurseries, CCTV cameras or adequate lighting.

4.2. Implementation of POSH¹ Act, 2013 in Unorganized Sector: A brief status-check

In the backdrop of the aforesaid discussion, we need to know the status of implementation of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013) in the unorganized sectors and also to study the safety of women at workplace.

4.3. Importance of the Local Committee

According to Section 6(1) of the Act every District Officer shall constitute in the district concerned, a Committee known as Local Committee (LC) to receive complaints of sexual harassment from establishments where the ICC has not been constituted due to having less than 10 workers. The Redressal mechanism for taking complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace in the unorganized sector is found in Section-7 of the Act, which discusses the composition, tenure and other terms and conditions of the Local Committee (LC). Domestic workers are separately defined under Section 2(e) of the Act. With regards to domestic workers, the Local Committee refers the complaint to the police for registering a case within seven days under Section-509² of IPC. Based on the interpretation of the above provision, we can infer that on every establishment having 10 or more employees, the Act is applicable and such companies or organizations/institutions are required to constitute an ICC.

Similarly, as per Section 19(c) of the Act, every employer shall organise workshops and awareness programs at regular intervals for sensitization of employees on the provisions of the Act and to orient the members on the Internal Complaint Committee (ICC). However, a study conducted by MAADHYAM³ reveals that there is a very doomed situation in the implementation of the Act in the said sector and no awareness programs have ever been conducted on the functioning and implementation of LC. It is also found that the mechanism is not properly working and the women labourers are not aware of the functioning of LC. It further reveals that not enough funds are spent on any training program for members of the LC. Furthermore, the National Commission for Women

¹The POSH Act has been enacted in the year 2013 with the objective of preventing and protecting women against the workplace, sexual harassment and to ensure effective redressal.

²Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman.

³Bhubaneswar based CSO on the implementation and functioning of LC in unorganized sectors.

and Odisha State Commission for Women are not giving priority to sanctioning funds to organize awareness programs on the capacity building of members of LC and ICC.

A 2018 study conducted by the Martha Farrell Foundation and society⁴ for Participatory Research in Asia based on Right to Information requests that was sent to 655 districts in the country found that many districts had failed to set up the Committees or constitute them in line with the legal provisions. It is difficult to find any information on their official record or websites even where they existed. The study also found lack of awareness regarding the role and responsibilities among the Committee members indicating a lack of capacity to handle sexual harassment complaints. Out of 655 Districts in the country, only 29% replied that they had formed the Local Committees, while 15% had not done so. The majority 56% did not respond. By May 2020, even in the capital Delhi only 8 out of 11 Districts had constituted Local Committees. The study also reveals that there is no awareness about the Local Committees because the Central Government has not given funds to State Governments to spread awareness and the implementation of the Act has failed in the unorganized or informal sector.

There is no proper implementation of the Act in the unorganized sector and no constitution is functional for the Local Committees (LCs) because there is an apathetic and indifferent attitude of stakeholders towards the unorganized sector

In 2017, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India by the NGO initiatives for Inclusion Foundation that sought effective implementation of the Act which is still pending in the Court. Similarly, another PIL was filed in 2017 in Madras High Court seeking a direction for proper implementation of the Act in the State of Tamil Nadu.

The studies also identified the following legal gaps in the implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal Act (2013). Such as:

- a) Confidentiality is not maintained strictly during the recording of proceedings; as a result, the privacy of the aggrieved woman is not protected.
- b) The ICC/LC most of times, focus on mutual settlement of women harassment cases rather than conducting free and fair inquiry.

⁴*The Martha Farrell Foundation, New Delhi supports practical interventions which are committed to achieving a gender-just society and promoting life-long learning.*

- c) The vulnerability of aggrieved woman increases and she feels insecure due to lack of maintenance of strict confidentiality and privacy during proceedings or inquiry,
- d) The selection of external members of the LC is not done carefully and experienced members are not nominated by the authority to be the members of ICC or LC. The selection of members of ICC and LC are done in a casual manner by the authority which does not yield any productive result.
- e) For their orientation and capacity building, no proper and regular training is imparted to the members of ICC and LC
- f) In the private sector, the authorities are not liable to follow the recommendations of the LC.
- g) There is no provision available for a support system for aggrieved women in the post inquiry period. As a result, she will be the target of the whole office because of her complaint or raising her voice.
- h) No bureaucrat or officer is held accountable for not implementing the constitution LC properly.

5. Conclusion

Surely there are laws to protect women and prevent exploitation but the legislation are not implemented strictly. To conclude, women empowerment cannot be possible unless women come hand in hand for self empowerment. There is need to reduce minimized poverty, promoting education of women prevention and elimination of violence against women. However India is also known as “Bharat Mata” who in turn says that women serve as the mother of every Indian, which simply means that women look after every Indian child. At last men ought not to forget the fact that “men are in women”. Then only the Vedic verse (wherever women is respected, god resides there) would come true. Based on the analysis presented above and looking at the contemporary situation this work considers these following recommendations -

- Setting up of Local Committees (LCs) in the unorganized sector.
- Monitoring Local Committees by competent authority to ensure that they are functioning properly.
- Allocation of separate funds to Local Committees for their operations.
- Enforcing sanctions in case on non-compliance with law.
- Collecting and publishing data annually on the number of cases of sexual harassment at workplace.

- Conducting audits regarding functioning of Local Committees including the number of cases disposed of and the awareness training programs organized.
- Facilitating dialogue between civil society organizations and workers organizations/unions to make sure women are made more aware working women are aware of their rights and the Redressal Mechanism under the law and increase the public understanding of the law by publishing it.

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Report- I: National Webinar on ‘Women in Higher Education-Challenges and Opportunities

17th June, 2020

MAHATMA GANDHI CENTRAL UNIVERSITY
&
CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF ODISHA
jointly organise a National Webinar
**'Women in Indian Higher Education:
Challenges and Opportunities'**

Chairperson
Prof. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma
Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor
Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Bihar

Chief Guest
Dr. (Smt.) Pankaj Mittal
Secretary General
Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi

Special Guest
Prof. I. Ramabrahmam
Vice-Chancellor
Central University of Odisha, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Special Guest
Prof. Shashikala Wanjari
Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor
MGCT Women's College, Ranchi (Jharkhand)

Special Guest
Prof. Sunaina Singh
Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor
Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Bihar

Coordinators
Prof. Rajeev Kumar
Dean, School of Social Sciences
Mahatma Gandhi Central University,
Bihar

Prof. Shahana Majumdar
Presiding Officer, Internal Complaints Cell
Mahatma Gandhi Central University,
Bihar

Meeting : 980 5756 1011
Password : 170620
<https://zoom.us/j/98057561011?pwd=THYkYk1CaTRkLTlmdUo0dFRKc1U0Zz09>

Registration
<https://forms.gle/xaiMnClzJuEFR6jC6>

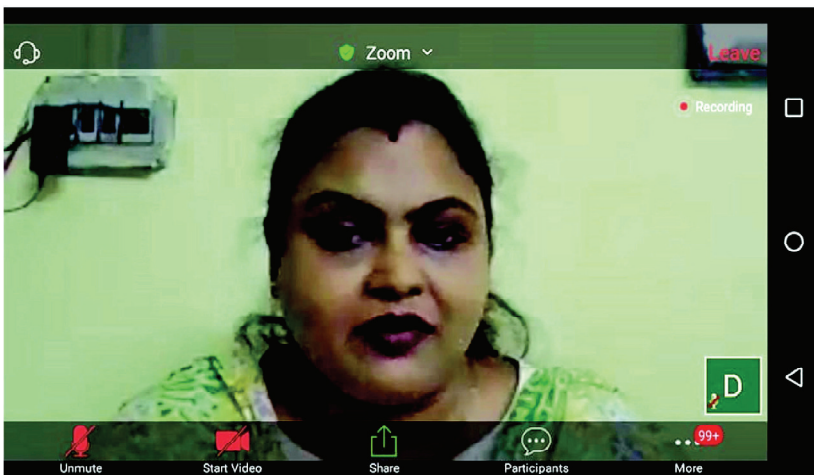
You are cordially invited

Wednesday, 17 June 2020
11:00 AM to 01:00 PM

Higher education makes a vital contribution to sustainable development through the generation and dissemination of knowledge. As the 21st century approaches, women graduates face exciting perspectives. Increasingly, they are strongly urged to assume their rightful place in the decision-making process - both in the systems and institutions of higher education and also in the various professions for which they have studied. As this dual role is of greatest importance for society, women merit, strong encouragement in these endeavours. On this background, to put our ideas together on “Women in Indian Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities”, Central University of Odisha (CUO) jointly organised this webinar with Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Bihar (MGCUB) on 17th June, 2020.

Dr. Kakoli Banerjee, Assistant Professor, Department of Biodiversity and Conservation of Natural Resources, CUO was the **Co-Coordinator of the programme** from our side. The programme started with **Vedic Mangalacharan** by **Dr. Vishvesh, Assistant Professor, Department of Sanskrit, School of Humanities and Languages, MGCUB**. **Welcome address** was delivered by **Prof. Shahna Mazumdar, Presiding Officer, Internal Complaints Cell, MGCUB**. **Subject Brief and Compiled Report** of paper presenters was presented by **Dr. Kakoli Banerjee, Presiding Officer, Internal Complaints Committee, CUO**. She started her lecture with the

words of Swami Vivekananda “*To educate your women first and leave them to themselves, they will tell you what reforms are necessary*”. She highlighted the recently released report of MHRD, stating the status of women in comparison to men in higher education. She added women empowerment, abolishing girl foeticide, abolishing women assaults, enhancing women brain and leadership are the need of the hour. Also she highlighted Marie Curie, the first women to receive Nobel Prize, Mother Teresa, Kalpana Chawla, Nati Binodini and Nandini Satpathy should be our role models who have exhibited their power and their contribution to a civilized society.



Dr. Kakoli Banerjee, Presiding Officer, Internal Complaints Committee, CUO delivering her address

Dr. Minati Sahoo, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, CUO introduced the **Special Guest Prof. Shashikala Wanjari, Hon’ble Vice Chancellor, SNDT Women’s University, Mumbai**. In her address Dr. Wanjari gave a statistical view of the women in every sphere of profession. She added, recently released report, affirms that total enrolment of women in HE as per 2018- 19 is 1.82 crore, as compared to men 1.92 crore. This is an increase of 51.8 lakh women at an incredible 4.9% Compound Annual Growth Rate. Women are now 48.6% of enrolled students up from 44.6% in 2011-12. The Gender Part Index has reached 1.0 for the first time from 0.88 in 2011-12. Even the Female Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has jumped for the first time from 19.4 in 2011-12 to 26.4% in 2018-19.

Ms. Sapna Devi, Assistant Professor, Department of Library and Information Science, MGCUB introduced the **Special Guest Prof. Sunaina Singh, Hon’ble Vice Chancellor, Nalanda University, Nalanda**. In her address she said, despite marked advances towards gender equality and women

empowerment especially during the last century, progress has been slow and disparities persist around the world; with women representing only a third of researchers globally and often facing gender-based discrimination and a lack of equal opportunities. Women should be honoured for their contribution to the society to preserve our democratic character in learning.

Dr. Preeti Bajpai, Associate Professor, Department of Zoology, MGCUB introduced the **Chief Guest Dr. (Smt.) Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi**. She quoted the words of Dr. Banerjee of CUO and also discussed the real-world scenario of women in India and Indian Universities. She said that only 2% of women are there in Higher Education. Unfortunately, the spate of recent disturbing events in the national capital and in other parts of the country have spurred the UGC to review existing arrangements that are currently in place on the campuses of all institutions of higher learning to ensure the freedom, safety and security of girls, and women in particular, and of the entire youth in general.



Dr. (Smt.) Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi delivering her address

Prof. Rajeev Kumar, Dean, School of Social Sciences, MGCUB introduced the **Special Guest Prof. I. Ramabrahmam, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Central University of Odisha**. In his address, he said that he was honoured to share the platform of this forum with such personalities. He even congratulated Vice Chancellor, MGCUB for joining hands in this programme. He discussed the challenges faced by women students in Universities and colleges and to motivate girl children into higher education. He also added a note on the number of very few women in higher education.

Dr. Rudrani Mohanty, Assistant Professor, Department of Odia, CUO introduced the **Prof. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Mahatma Gandhi Central University Bihar**. He delivered the **Presidential address** and thanked Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Central University of Odisha and all the dignitaries for sharing their knowledge on such challenging topic of the country. He insisted on the fact that women should be given priority in their achievements and they should be honoured for the same. He thanked his staffs for their support in organising this webinar.



Prof. I. Ramabrahmam, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Central University of Odisha and Prof. Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Mahatma Gandhi Central University Bihar delivering their address

Concluding remarks were delivered by **Prof. P. Durga Prasad, Visiting Professor, Department of Sociology, CUO**. Vote of thanks was delivered by **Dr. Sarita Tiwari, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, MGCUB**. The webinar ended with the **National Anthem** arranged by **Mr. Narendra Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, MGCUB**.

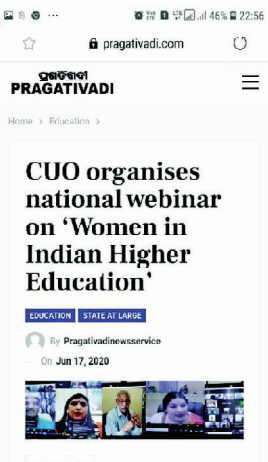
NEWS IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Important Links

[18/06, 11:10] Pro: http://www.prameyanews.com/cuo-organises-national-seminar-on-women-in-indian-higher-education/

[18/06, 11:10] Pro: https://pragativadi.com/cuo-organises-national-webinar-on-women-in-indian-higher-education/

[18/06, 11:10] Pro: National Webinar on Women in Indian Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities https://indiaeducationdiary.in/national-webinar-on-women-in-indian-higher-education-challenges-and-opportunities/



Advertisement in Odia titled 'ଭାରତୀୟ ଉଚ୍ଚଶିକ୍ଷାରେ ମହିଳା: ଆହ୍ୱାନ ଏବଂ ସୁଯୋଗ' ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ଜାତୀୟ ସେମିନାର. The ad includes a video player showing the webinar and text describing the event's importance for women's education in India.

Report-II: Webinar on Gender Mainstreaming in Workplace: Vigilance & Initiatives

12th February, 2021

The Internal Complaints Committee of the Central University of Odisha organized a webinar titled '*Gender Mainstreaming in Workplace: Vigilance & Initiatives*'. **Dr Kakoli Banerjee, Assistant Professor, DBCNR and Presiding Officer, ICC** gave a warm welcome to all the dignitaries and explained the scope and significance of the ICC and Gender studies.



Webinar on
GENDER MAINSTREAMING
IN WORKPLACE
Vigilance and Initiatives

12 FEB 2021
10:30AM - 12:30PM





KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Prof. Nilima Srivastava
Director, School of Gender and Development Studies, IGNOU



CHIEF PATRON
Prof. I. Ramabrahmam
Vice-Chancellor



INAUGURAL ADDRESS
Prof. Kshiti Bhusan Das
Pro-Vice Chancellor

RESOURCE PERSONS



CURTAIN RAISER
Dr. Asit Kumar Das
Registrar



Ms. Namrata Chadha
Chairman
Mahila Adhikar Abhiyan



Prof. Sheela Suryanarayanan
Head, Centre for Women's Studies
University of Hyderabad



Dr. Sarojini Sarangi
Obstetrician & Gynaecologist
Sarojini Hospital, Cuttack





SUMMING-UP
Prof. P. Durga Prasad
Visiting Professor, Sociology



MODERATOR
Dr. Kakoli Banerjee
Presiding Officer, ICC

ORGANISED BY INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (ICC) CUO

REGISTRATION URL

<https://forms.gle/1LsCrsd5dktP1RS>

CISCO WEBEX URL

<https://www.dbcncr.com/odisha/MTD/113072000000000113072000044132000>
Meeting number: 76-499-7234
Passcode: 12345

FACEBOOK LIVE

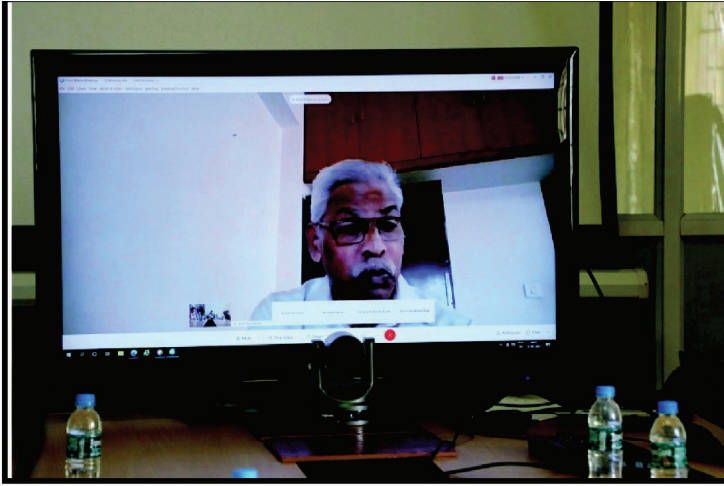
<https://www.facebook.com/roffbcuo/>
id: 183002475243448

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Mob: 092275 92054

Dr. Meera Swain
meeraswain24@gmail.com
Mob: 09477 1333500

The Inaugural address was delivered by **Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of CUO Prof. I. Ramabrahmam**. While outlining the importance of Gender Equality programmes, not only at the Govt. level but also at University levels, he urged the CSR wings of PSU's and Banks to distribute laptops or tablets to tribal girls for their educational empowerment in selected schools and colleges.



Prof. I. Ramabrahmam delivering his inaugural address

Prof. P. Durga Prasad, Visiting Professor, Department of Sociology, CUO in his 'curtain raiser' address described the importance of working on upliftment of women in aspirational districts like Koraput. He also highlighted the policy options and instruments needed for calibrated progress of women in particular.

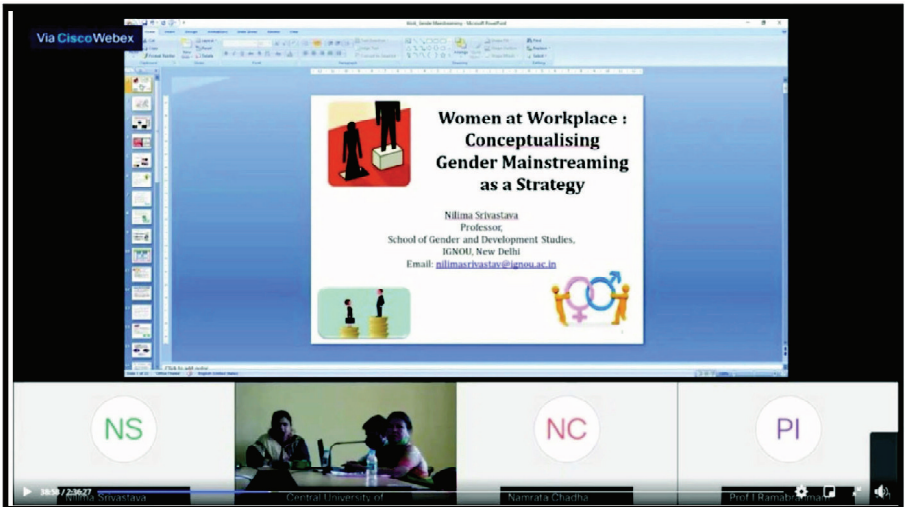


Prof. P. Durga Prasad delivering his curtain-raising address

The Keynote Speaker and the Resource Persons were introduced by the ICC members, **Dr. Rudrani Mohanty**, Faculty in the Department of Odia and **Dr. Meera Swain**, Faculty in the Department of Anthropology.



Prof Nilima Srivastava, Director, School of Gender and Development Studies, IGNOU delivered the keynote address on *‘Women at Workplace: Conceptualizing Gender Mainstreaming as a Strategy’*. She emphasized on the issues of work valuation done by men and women in society and the psychological, institutional and situational barriers confronting women in society. Hence change in attitude is required to bring up a girl child, she averred.

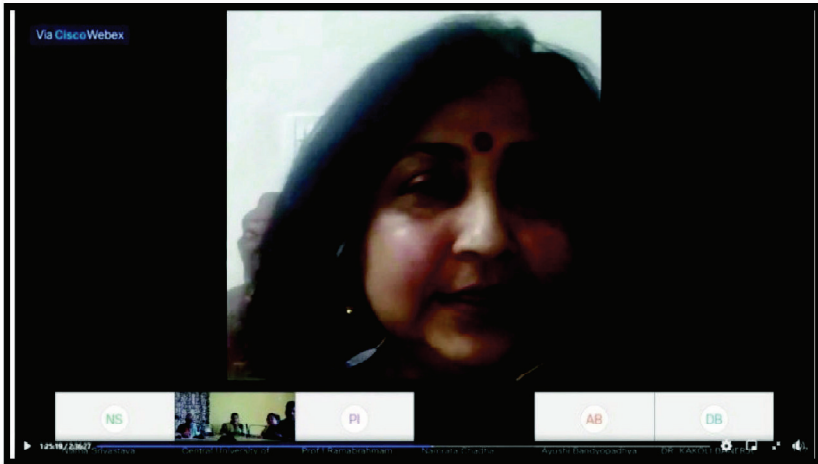


Prof. Nilima Srivastava delivering her Keynote address

There were deliberations by three eminent women resource persons from Academia and Social service on three different aspects relating to women at workplace. **Ms Namrata Chaddha, Chairman, Mahila Adhikar Abhiyan**

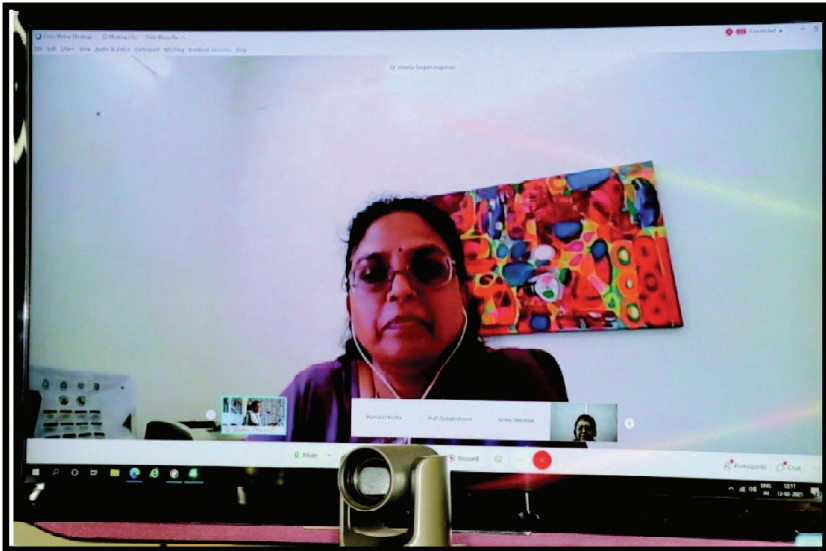
made an incisive presentation on '*Struggling for Survival in Unorganized Sector*'. **Prof Sheela Suryanarayanan, Head, Centre for Women's Studies, University of Hyderabad** spoke poignantly about '*Gender Inequalities at Workplace in India: Present Situation & Persisting Challenges*'. **Dr Sarojini Sarangi, Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Sarojini Hospital, Cuttack** deliberated on the issues of '*Gender Discrimination from Womb to Tomb*'.

Ms. Namrata Chadha in her deliberation highlighted the point that only Women's Day celebration can't solve the problem of inequality at the workplace. There is unseen and unheard violence facing the women folk in workplaces, particularly in the unorganized sectors, was her thought-provoking point. The Local Complaints Committee is silent on this issue and hence they should be made active by the government, she felt. Moreover, the laws and policies for women should be pertinent to India rather than copying from foreign countries, was her concluding observation.



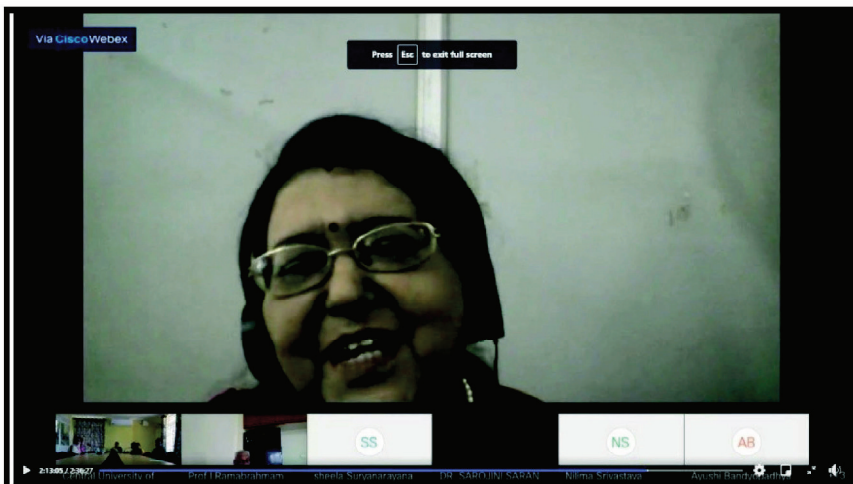
Ms. Namrata Chadha prefacing her address

Prof. Sheela Suryanarayana highlighted and compared statistically the female workforce participation in the society with that of men. There are gender-based wage gaps which are often unnoticed and much less resolved. She also pointed out the disturbing statistics of sexual harassment cases at workplace and the way the women are taken undue advantage of.



Prof. Sheela Suryanarayan calling attention to female workforce participation rates

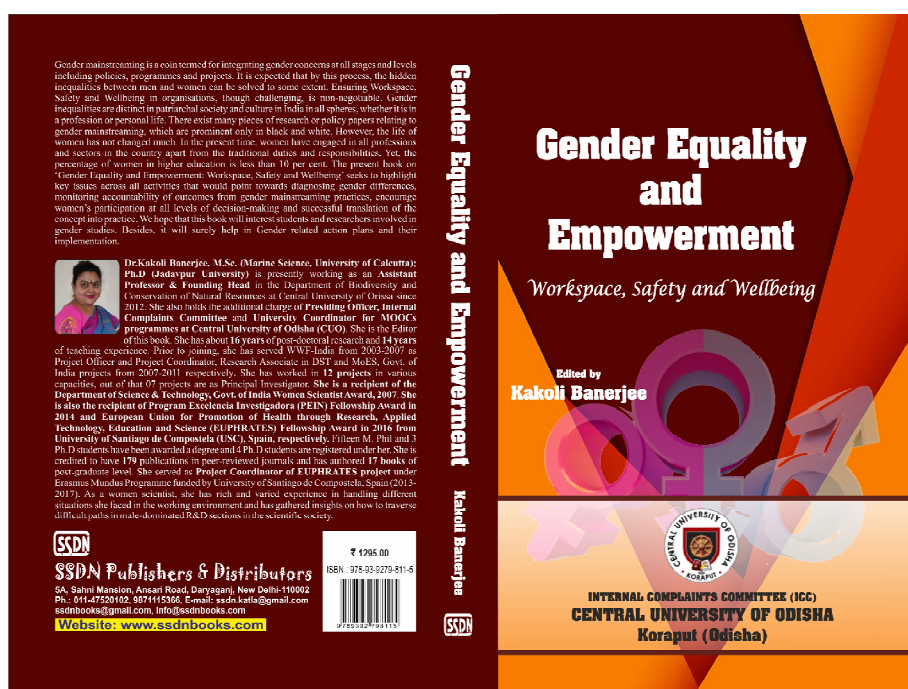
Dr. Sarojini Sarangi explained through her case studies from Odisha on the vexed problem of preference of male child over a female child and how the rate of female foeticide is rising inspite of many awareness programmes about the importance of girl child from a demographic balance viewpoint. Emphasizing on gender equality and role responsibilities, she felt that women were fully capable of sustaining a family. The negative consequences of sexual abuse of girls and women in the society were loud and clear in her discussion.



Dr. Sarojini Sarangi condemning female foeticide

Prof. P. Durga Prasad, summed up the programme highlighting the commitment of the CUO to uphold the women's rights and dignity at workplace. He appreciated the reflections of the experts even while contextualizing them in the socio-economic matrix and highlighted the gender initiatives.

Dr Kakoli Banerjee, Presiding Officer concluded the webinar by presenting a vote of thanks. She thanked the Resource Persons, Faculty, Scholars, staff and students for their active participation and commitment to action. She also declared the winners of the competitions organized for students and scholars on short-story writing and pictorial communication on the themes of Gender Equity in Society and Gender Violence at Workplace. Closing the webinar, she announced the publication of an edited book on 'Gender Equality and Empowerment: Workspace Safety and Wellbeing' on the basis of this webinar deliberations and specially commissioned papers.



The webinar was attended by about more than 200 participants and was also showcased live in University facebook page and also in print media (local and national newspapers) for wider circulation. The recorded version of the webinar can be submitted for archiving as and when asked by the Ministry.

CLIPPING OF THE NEWSPAPERS

AROUND ODISHA Truth in true form

CUO organizes Webinar on Gender Mainstreaming in Workplace: Vigilance & Initiatives

(A.O. Bureau)
Koraput, Feb 12: The Internal Complaints Committee of the Central University of Odisha organized a webinar titled "Gender Mainstreaming in Workplace: Vigilance & Initiatives". Prof Nilima Srivastava, Director, School of Gender and Development Studies, IGNOU delivered the keynote address, Ms Namrata Chaddha, Chairman, Mahila Adhikar Abhiyan, Prof Sheela Suryanarayanan, Head, Centre for Women's Studies, University of Hyderabad and Dr Sarojini Sarangi, Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Sarojini Hospital, Cuttack spoke on the occasion. Vice-Chancellor of the CUO, Prof. I. Ramabrahman delivered the inaugural address. Dr Kakoli Banerjee, Assistant Professor, DBCNR and Presiding Officer, ICC welcomed all the dignitaries and explained the scope and significance of the ICC and Gender studies. The Vice-Chancellor outlined the importance of the Gender Equality programme not only at the Govt. level but also at University levels in his inaugural address. He urged the CSR wings of PSU's and Banks to distribute 20-30 laptops or tablets to tribal girls for their empowerment. Prof. Srivastava delivered the keynote address titled 'Women at Workplace: Conceptualizing Gender Mainstreaming as a Strategy'. She emphasized on the issues of work valuation done by men and women in so-



ciety and the psychological, institutional and situational barriers for women in society. Hence change in attitude is required to bring up a girl child, she averred. The other three eminent women resource persons from Academia and Social service spoke on three different aspects of women at workplace. Ms Namrata Chaddha, Chairman, Mahila Adhikar Abhiyan presented on 'Struggling for Survival in Unorganized Sector'. Prof Sheela Suryanarayanan, Head, Centre for Women's Studies, University of Hyderabad spoke on the topic 'Gender Inequalities at Workplace in India: Present Situation & Persisting Challenges'. Dr Sarojini Sarangi, Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Sarojini Hospital, Cuttack deliberated on the subject "Gender Discrimination from Womb to Tomb". All the distinguished speakers highlighted the present situation of women at workplace and sensitized the audience on various gender aspects. The deliberations were followed by an interactive session where members of the faculty & students shared their observa-

tions and asked questions to which the speakers responded professionally. Prof. P. Durgaprasad, Visiting Professor, Department of Sociology, CUO in his curtain raiser described the importance of working on upliftment of women in an aspirational district like Koraput. He also highlighted the policy instruments for Critical Path Analysis needed for the progress of women in particular. He also summed up the programme highlighting the commitment of the CUO to uphold the women's rights & dignity at workplace. He appreciated the reflections of the experts even while contextualizing them in the socio-economic matrix and outlined the CUO gender initiatives, especially in view of the forthcoming Women's Day. Dr Kakoli Banerjee, Presiding Officer concluded the webinar by presenting a vote of thanks. She also declared the winners of the competitions organized for students and scholars on short-story writing and pictorial communication on the themes of Gender Equity in Society and Gender Violence at Workplace.

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CUO organizes webinar on gender mainstreaming in workplace

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Bhubaneswar: The Internal Complaints Committee of the Central University of Odisha organized a webinar titled *"Gender Mainstreaming in Workplace: Vigilance & Initiatives"*.

Prof Nilima Srivastava, Director, School of Gender and Development Studies, IGNOU delivered the keynote address. Ms Namrata Chaddha, Chairman, Mahila Adhikar Abhiyan, Prof Sheela Suryanarayanan, Head, Centre for Women's Studies, University of Hyderabad and Dr Sarojini Sarangi, Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Sarojini Hospital, Cuttack spoke on the occasion.

Vice-Chancellor of the CUO, Prof. I. Ramabrahmam delivered the inaugural address. Dr Kakoli Banerjee, Assistant Professor, DBCNR and Presiding Officer, ICC welcomed all the dignitaries and explained the scope and significance of the ICC and Gender studies.

The Vice-Chancellor outlined the importance of the Gender Equality programmes not only at the Govt. level but also at University levels in his inaugural address. He urged the CSR wings of PSU's and Banks to distribute 20-30 laptops or tablets to tribal girls for their empowerment.

Prof. Srivastava delivered the keynote address titled *'Women at Workplace: Conceptualizing Gender Mainstreaming as a Strategy'*.

She emphasized on the issues of work valuation done by men and women in society and the psychological, institutional and situational barriers for women in society. Hence the change in attitude is required to bring up a girl child, she averred.

The other three eminent women resource persons from Academia and Social service spoke on three different aspects of women at the workplace. Ms Namrata Chaddha, Chairman, Mahila Adhikar Abhiyan presented on *'Struggling for Survival in Unorganized Sector'*.

Prof Sheela Suryanarayanan, Head, Centre for Women's Studies, University of Hyderabad spoke on the topic *'Gender Inequalities at Workplace in India: Present Situation & Persisting*

Challenges'. Dr Sarojini Sarangi, Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Sarojini Hospital, Cuttack deliberated on the subject *"Gender Discrimination from Womb to Tomb"*.

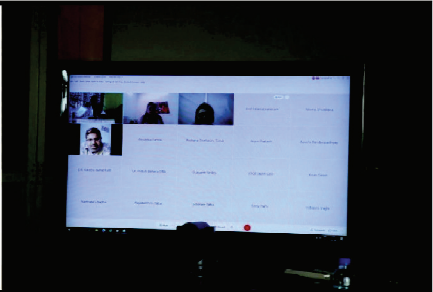
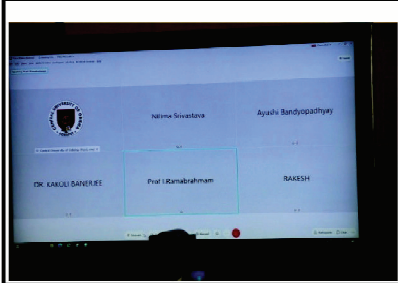
All the distinguished speakers highlighted the present situation of women at workplace and sensitized the audience on various gender aspects. The deliberations were followed by an interactive session where members of the faculty & students shared their observations and asked questions to which the speakers responded professionally.

Prof. P. Durgaprasad, Visiting Professor, Department of Sociology, CUO in his curtain raiser described the importance of working on upliftment of women in an aspirational district like Koraput. He also highlighted the policy instruments for Critical Path Analysis needed for the progress of women in particular.

He also summed up the programme highlighting the commitment of the CUO to uphold the women's rights & dignity at the workplace.

He appreciated the reflections of the experts even while contextualizing them in the socio-economic matrix and outlined the CUO gender initiatives, especially in view of the forthcoming Women's Day.

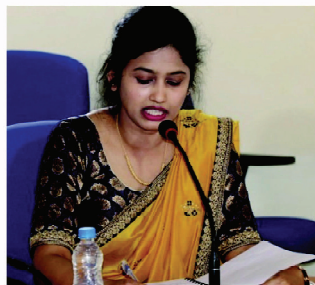
Dr Kakoli Banerjee, Presiding Officer concluded the webinar by presenting a vote of thanks. She also declared the winners of the competitions organized for students and scholars on short-story writing and pictorial communication on the themes of Gender Equity in Society and Gender Violence at Workplace.



Report-III: International Women's Day 8th March 2021

Guiding Theme – ‘Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a Covid-19 World’

The Internal Complaints Committee of the Central University of Odisha organized a webinar on ‘**Indian Woman Leadership in Covid-19 Times**’ to observe the International Women's Day. Ms. Archana Snehasini Turuk, Ph.D Research Scholar, Department of Biodiversity & Conservation of Natural Resources welcomed the guests. Dr. Kakoli Banerjee moderated the programme.



Dr. Ms. Kakoli Banerjee moderating the programme; Ms. Archana Snehasini Turuk welcoming the guests



CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF ODISHA

(Established by the Parliament under the Central Universities Act, 2009)
P.O. NAD, Sunabeda, Koraput - 763 004, Odisha, India

Cordially invites for the
International Women's Day 2021

Theme:- Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in Covid-19 World

Webinar on

"Indian Women Leadership in Covid-19 Times"

(8th March 2021, 10:00 am - 11:30 am)

Speakers



Keynote Speaker

Prof. Sabita Acharya
Vice Chancellor, Utkal University
Bhubaneswar, Odisha



Resource Person

Prof. Surabhi Banerjee
Former & Founding Vice Chancellor
Central University of Odisha, Koraput, Odisha



Resource Person

Prof. Meena Hariharan
Founder Director, Centre for Health Psychology
University of Hyderabad, Telangana

ORGANISED BY INTERNAL COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (ICC) CUO

Registration URL

<https://forms.gle/5EPbMdz1tLlFqAwrEA>

CISCO Webex Link

<https://cwo.webex.com/cwo/j.php?MTID=md618dbf7773439bc496868d58f165be7>

Facebook Live

<https://www.facebook.com/people/Cuo-Koraput/100012575230448>

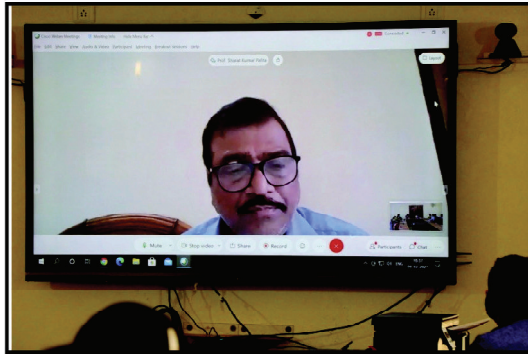
CONTACT PERSONS

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Email: drudrani@gmail.com, Ph.No. 093375 95054

Dr. Meera Swain
Email: meeraswain2k9@gmail.com, Ph.No.: 09777333300

The programme started with Opening Remarks in the form of a presentation by **Prof S K Palita**, Dean, School of Biodiversity & Conservation of Natural Resources (SBCNR), who outlined the importance of women in society. He highlighted the statistics of women leadership in Covid-19 times both in India and the world. He stated that the reports of COVID-19 deaths in countries led

by women were lower than those led by men. He appreciated the role of Central University of Odisha in Corona Pandemic times which launched ‘Bharosa’ – an online counseling initiative for students link for consultation of the students.



Prof. Sharat Kumar Palita sharing his opening remarks in the programme

Prof. Ms. Surabhi Banerjee, Former and Founder Vice Chancellor of CUO spoke on ‘*Reflection on Challenges for Women in Institution-Building*’. An eminent academician & institution builder, she stated that the state of the women in the country has many a mile to go but is poised reach its destination. She referred to a field study in a village in the northern part of India where a woman helplessly says, ‘I am no one....’ She also referred to woman leaders like Malala Yusufzai and developmental programmes like *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* launched by our Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi. She fondly recollected the initial days of the CUO and how she envisaged it as a world class university inspite of the numerous problems including remoteness, backwardness and insurgency. Her speech was beautifully decorated with relevant references from the *Devi Sutra* of Rig Veda, Tagore’s *Chitrangada* and Emanda Gormend’s poem *The Hill We Climb*. She said that women are multi-taskers provided they get complimentary assistance from men.



Prof. Ms. Surabhi Banerjee Reflecting on women in Institution-Building

Prof. Ms. Meena Hariharan, Founder Director, Centre for Health Psychology, University of Hyderabad and Member, Executive Council, CUO deliberated on the topic '*Role of Women in the context of Atmanirbhar Bharat*'. Prof. Meena explained Atma as inner consciousness and Nirbhar as reliance, which means relying on one's own inner consciousness. She said that the concept of Atmanirbhar Bharat refers to the collective consciousness of the nation and that women have played a great role in implementing this concept in all ages. Focusing on the pandemic period, she gave examples of women's (Anganwadi workers) contribution in making PPEs and decorative masks, tribal women of Uttar Pradesh manufacturing sanitizers from Mahua, women of Chattisgarh nurturing Neem tree and promoting Roti banks for migrant labourers. She explained that the 'Mother' in Women manages finances and takes care of life. She lauded the efforts of CUO in launching a counseling helpline for students for their emotional cognitive rehabilitation and well-being. Infact, she was one of the architects of this helpline called 'Bharosa'.



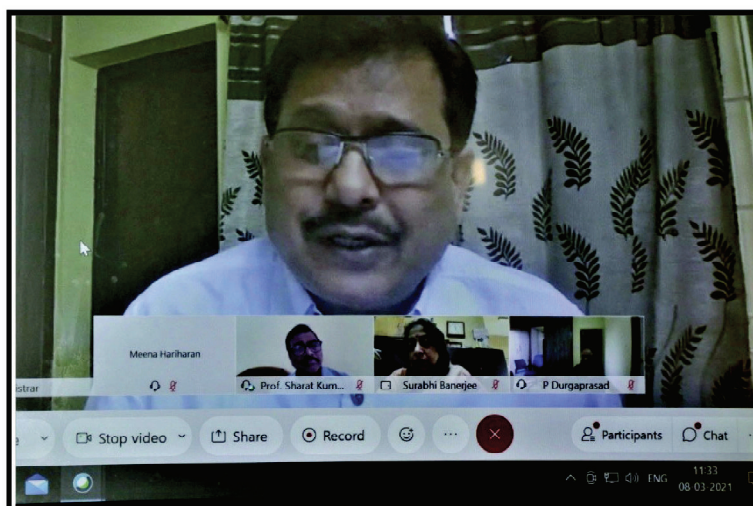
Prof. Ms. Meena Hariharan speaking on women's role in Atmanirbhar Bharat

Prof. I. Ramabrahmam, Vice Chancellor, CUO in his presidential address underlined the significance of the International Woman's Day and the commitment of the CUO to uphold the women's rights and dignity at workplace. He informed that four of the Executive Council Members of the Central University of Odisha are women and provide valuable support to the CUO. He also acknowledged the contribution of Prof Surabhi Banerjee in laying a solid foundation to the growth of CUO.



Prof. I. Ramabrahmam highlighting women's leadership activities in India and abroad

Dr. Asit Kumar Das, Registrar, CUO shared his concluding remarks appreciating the Vice Chancellor, CUO for his dynamic leadership and the resource persons for their erudite deliberations, he thanked the ICC led by Dr. Ms. Kakoli Banerjee for organizing the webinar and Prof P Durga Prasad for mentoring it.



Dr. Asit Kumar Das presenting his concluding remarks

Dr Kakoli Banerjee, Assistant Professor, DBCNR and Presiding Officer, ICC, moderated the programme and proposed a formal vote of thanks. She thanked


all the distinguished dignitaries and explained the scope and significance of the ICC and the IWD. There were more than 100 participants both online and offline who participated in this programme.



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Home > State > Internal Complaints Committee of CUO organises Webinar on Indian Women Leadership in Covid-19 Times



Internal Complaints Committee Of CUO Organises Webinar On 'Indian Woman Leadership In Covid-19 Times'

By PragatiVadiNews1 · On Mar 8, 2021 · 45

Koraput (Sunabeda): The Internal Complaints Committee of the Central University of Odisha organised a webinar on 'Indian Woman Leadership in Covid-19 Times' to observe International Women's Day.

Ms. Archana Snehasini Turuk, PhD (Research Scholar, Department of Biodiversity welcomed the guests. The programme started with Opening Remarks in the form of a presentation by Prof S K Palita, Dean, SBCNR, who outlined the Importance of women in society.


Prof. Ms. Surabhi Banerjee, Former & Founding Vice Chancellor, CUO was the Resource Person. Prof Banerjee, an eminent academician & institution builder, stated that the state of the women in the country has many a mile to go but is poised reach its destination. She referred to a field study in a village in the northern part of India where a woman helplessly says, 'I am no one...!' She also referred to woman leaders like Malala Yusufai and developmental programmes like Beti Bachhao Beti Padhao. She fondly recollected the initial days of the CUO and how she envisaged it as a world class university in spite of the numerous problems including remoteness, backwardness and insurgency. Her speech was beautifully decorated with relevant references from the Devi Sutra of Rig Veda, Tagore's Chitrangada and Emanda Gormend's poem The Hill We Climb.

Prof. Ms. Meena Hariharan, Founder of Association of Health Psychologists, University of Hyderabad and Member, Executive Council, CUO deliberated on the topic of role of women in the context to Atmanirbhar Bharat. Prof Hariharan explained Atma as inner consciousness and Nirbhar as reliance, which means relying on one's own inner consciousness. She said that the concept of Atmanirbhar Bharat refers to the collective consciousness of the nation and women have played a great role in implementing this concept in all ages. Focusing on the pandemic period, she gave examples of women's (Anganwadi workers) contribution in making PPE and decorative masks, tribal women of Uttar Pradesh manufacturing sanitizers from Mahua, women of Chattisgarh nurturing Neem tree and promoting Roti banks for migrant labourers. She explained that the Mother in Women manages, finances, and takes care of life. She also mentioned the efforts by CUO to start a helpline number for students' emotional cognitive rehabilitation under her guidance where women faculty joined as counselors.

Prof I Ramabrahmam, Vice Chancellor, CUO in his presidential address underlined the significance of the International Woman's Day and the commitment of the CUO to uphold the women's rights & dignity at workplace. He informed that four of the Executive Council Members of the Central University of Odisha are women and provide valuable support to the CUO. He also acknowledged the contribution of Prof Surabhi Banerjee in laying a solid foundation to the growth of CUO.


Dr A K Das, Registrar, CUO shared lines of concluding remarks the Vice Chancellor, CUO for his dynamic leadership and the resource persons for their erudite deliberations. He thanked the ICC team under Dr

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Kakoli Banerjee for organizing the webinar and Prof P Durga Prasad for mentoring it.

Dr Kakoli Banerjee, Assistant Professor, DBCNR and Presiding Officer, ICC, moderated the programme and gave a formal vote of thanks. She thanked all the distinguished dignitaries and explained the scope and significance of the ICC and the IWD.

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କୋଭିଡ-୧୯ ସମୟରେ ଭାରତୀୟ ମହିଳା ନେତୃତ୍ୱ ସଂପର୍କିତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର



କୋରାପୁଟ,୧୦୩୩(ଅନୁପମ ମିଡିଆ): ଓଡ଼ିଶା କେନ୍ଦ୍ରୀୟ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତୀୟ ମହିଳା ଦିବସ ଅବସରରେ କୋଭିଡ-୧୯ ସମୟରେ ଭାରତୀୟ ମହିଳା ନେତୃତ୍ୱ ସଂପର୍କିତ ଏକ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅନୁଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଯାଇଛି । ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ପୂର୍ବତନ ଚଧା ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାତା କୁଳପତି ପ୍ରଫେସର ସୁରଭି ବାନାର୍ଜି ଯୋଗଦେଇ ଦେଶର ମହିଳାମାନେ ସେମାନଙ୍କ ଗତବ୍ୟସ୍ଥଳରେ ପହଞ୍ଚିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ପ୍ରସ୍ତୁତ ରହିଥିବା ସୁଚନା ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ମହିଳାମାନେ ଆର୍ଥିକ ପରିଚାଳନା କରନ୍ତି ଓ କାବଜର ଯତ୍ନ ନେଇଥାନ୍ତି

ବୋଲି ହାଇଦ୍ରାବାଦ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ଆସୋସିଏସନ ଅଫ ସାଇକୋଲୋଜିଷ୍ଟସର ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠାତା ପ୍ରଫେସର ମୀନା ହରିହରନ ପ୍ରକାଶ କରିଥିଲେ । କୋଭିଡ ମହାମାରୀ ସମୟରେ ଉତ୍ତରପ୍ରଦେଶର ଆଦିବାସୀ ମହିଳାମାନେ ପିପିଲି ଓ ସାଜସଜ୍ଜା ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ ନିର୍ମାଣ କରିବାର ଅବଦାନ ସଂପର୍କରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତୀୟ ଭାରତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ ମହିଳାମାନଙ୍କ ଭୂମିକା ସଂପର୍କରେ ସେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ଆନ୍ତର୍ଜାତୀୟ ମହିଳା ଦିବସର ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଓ ପ୍ରତିବନ୍ଧିତା ଉପରେ କୁଳପତି ପ୍ରଫେସର ଆଇ.ରାମଗୁରୁମ୍ମ ମଧ୍ୟ ଆଲୋଚନା କରିଥିଲେ । ଓଡ଼ିଶା କେନ୍ଦ୍ରୀୟ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟନିର୍ବାହୀ ପରିଷଦରେ ୪ ଜଣ ମହିଳା ସଦସ୍ୟା ରହିଥିବା ସେ ସୂଚନା ଦେଇଥିଲେ । ଏହି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମରେ ରେଜିଷ୍ଟ୍ରାର ଡ.ଏ.କେ.ଦାସ ,ପ୍ରଫେସର ଏସ.କେ.ପାଲିତ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ଯୋଗଦେଇଥିଲେ । କେନ୍ଦ୍ରୀୟ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟର ଆଭ୍ୟନ୍ତରୀଣ ଅଭିଯୋଗ କମିଟି ଆନୁକୁଲ୍ୟରେ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ କରାଯାଇଥିଲା । ପ୍ରାରମ୍ଭରେ ପିଏଚଡି ରିସର୍ଚ୍ଚ ଷ୍ଟେଲାର ଅର୍ଜନା ସେହାସିନି ଅତିଥି ପରିଚୟ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରିଥିଲେ । ଶେଷରେ ଡ.କାକୋଲି ବାନାର୍ଜି ଧନ୍ୟବାଦ ଅର୍ପଣ କରିଥିଲେ ।

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