



Department of Special Education



SNDT Women's University

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SNDT Women's University (SNDTWU)

Department of Special Education

Juhu Campus, Mumbai

Organizes

A National Seminar on

"Rights of Differently Abled Women (DAW)"

sponsored by

National Commission for Women

December 15 – 16, 2022

Final Report

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Concept Note

The National Seminar on the theme, “Rights of Differently Abled Women (DAW)” was organized by the Department of Special Education, SNDT Women’s University, Mumbai. This objective of this seminar was to reflect on the research and evidence-based practices existing across India that deal with the intersection of gender-based discrimination with exclusionary social practices. It served as a forum for the various groups of professionals to share the current scenario with respect to Women with disabilities (WwD) and examine the need for changes in the present system.

About SNDT WU

SNDT women’s University is the first women’s university in India as well as in South-East Asia. It was founded by Bharat Raana Maharshi Dr. Dhondo Keshav Karve in 1916, in Pune, to support the cause of women’s empowerment through higher education. The university operates from 3 campuses: Churchgate (headquarters), Juhu and Pune. The University has been accredited by NAAC with ‘A’ grade in 2015.

The Department of Special Education (DSE) was established in 1977. Ever since, DSE has been involved in human resource development for the disability sector. Our Mission is, ‘Nurturing, Enabling and Empowering People with Disabilities’ and our commitment is to provide quality education. The department offers programmes in Ph.D. (Special Education); M.Ed. (LD, ID, VI); B.Ed. (LD, ID, VI) and a Post Graduate Diploma in Management of Learning Disability.

Objectives of the Conference:

This conference was planned with following objectives:

- To create awareness about the government schemes and policies related to DAW
- To reflect on innovative researches and evidence based practices related to DAW
- To reflect on how community can play important role in providing opportunities to DAW
- To develop an action plan to promote the equality and equity for DAW

Background and Justification

India is a vast country with a population of more than one billion and nearly 70 million persons (based on the projections made by various international agencies such as the United Nations, WHO and World Bank). with disabilities. About 48 percent of them are women. Women in India have been struggling to get their rights. The women’s rights movement itself is in its initial stages. They are fighting all the stereotypes that have been ingrained in the nation. Women with disabilities are disadvantaged because women’s work is seen as secondary to that of men. A woman’s main role, in most communities, is still to be a wife, mother, and homemaker; while the man is the main decision-maker and income-earner. Since education and vocational

training are seen as investments for higher-value employment, a woman is less likely to have the opportunity to receive them. While public attitudes are changing, illiteracy rates among women worldwide are falling, and more and more women are entering the labour market, the situation, however, has changed little for women with disabilities. The general attitude is still that a disabled woman has little hope of becoming a wife or a mother, or of getting a productive and rewarding job. Thus, the normal tendency among the laymen is to visualize the women with disabilities as a burden on her family, society or the state – a dependant for the rest of her life.

Both disability and gender are physical constructs that totally ignore personhood. To be a disabled person is to fail to measure up to the general cultural definition of masculinity as strength, physical ability and autonomy. To be a disabled woman is to be considered unable to fulfill the role of homemaker, wife as also mother, and unable to conform to the stereotype of beauty and femininity in terms of physical appearance. But yes, being a disabled woman also fits well into the stereotype of passivity and dependency.

Women and girls with disabilities in India are forced into mental hospitals and institutions, where they face unsanitary conditions, risk physical and sexual violence, and experience involuntary treatment, including electroshock therapy. As one woman put it, they are “treated worse than animals.”

Women with disabilities face double discrimination due to prevalence of traditional gender roles and expectations. Disabilities locate the individual in a compromised position not only as a function of biology but also as a product of a complex interaction amongst the non-biological factors like gender, caste, class, neighbourhood relations, the nature of kinship and family structure.

According to Census-2001, there are 93.01 lakh women with disabilities, which constitute 42.46 percent of total disabled population. The women with disabilities require protection against exploitation and abuse.

Disability rights cannot be guaranteed in a context that does not affirm the equality of all women. Given that women with disabilities are some of the most marginalized segments of a community, a recognition of the multiple identities of women and children with disabilities and how that can construct their experiences of multiple forms of discrimination will help shape better development programmes and rights-based laws and policies.

Under strategies for economic empowerment of women with disabilities, special programmes are developed for providing education, employment and other rehabilitation services to the women with disabilities, keeping in view their special needs; special educational and vocation training facilities set - up and programmes undertaken to rehabilitate abandoned disabled women/ girls by encouraging their adoption in families, support to house them and impart them training for gainful employment skills.

Scott Hamilton said that “The only disability in life is a bad attitude.” This kind of mentality is what is required for everyone who wants to find happiness in life. No benefit comes from thinking over spilled milk, one should

always have a positive attitude and know that there is light at the end of the tunnel. There are certain challenges faced by women with disabilities such as accessibility, education, access to healthcare, lack of employment opportunities, etc.

Relevance of the Conference

India has made rapid progress in improving the education system during the last few decades through various national and international laws, commitments and guidelines emphasizing equitable and sustainable educational opportunities for all.

There needs to be a shift from a charity-based approach to a rights-based approach. The main problem lies in the psyche of a significant mass which considers women with disabilities a liability, and this leads to discrimination and harassment against them and their isolation from the mainstream. Today there is an immense need for all the rights based challenges, provisions and practices to be addressed by the various stakeholders from different disciplines.

This seminar provided a platform for all the special educators, and stakeholders to discuss ways to promote gender equality and empowerment of women as it is essential to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Women and girls with disabilities experience double discrimination, which places them at higher risk of gender-based violence, sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation.

Keeping this background in mind, a two-day seminar was conducted on December 15-16, 2022. Below is the report of this Two-Day National Seminar.

List of Resource Persons

Session	Resource Person	Designation
Day 1		
Keynote	Prof, Sudesh Mukhopadhyay	Former Chairperson RCI
2	Prof. Vibhuti Patel	Former Head, P.G. Department of Economics, SNDTWU Advocate for Women Rights
3	Prof. Anita Ghai	School of Human Studies Ambedkar University Gender and Human Rights Activist
4	Dr Anuja Gulati	Program Management Specialist Gender and Human Rights United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
Day 2		
1	Adv. Kanchan Pamnani	Solicitor & Human Rights Activist
2	Dr A. L. Sharda	Director, Population First Media Advocate for Gender Sensitivity
3	Dr Madhura Nagchouduri	Assistant Professor, Centre for Disability Studies & Action Tata Institute of Social Science
4	Dr Sushama Nagarkar	Rehabilitation Psychologist Founder, Yash Charitable Trust
Panel Discussion	Dr Putul Sathe	Head in Charge, Associate Professor Research Centre for Women's Studies (RCWS) SNDTWU

Panel Discussion	Ms Jasmina Khanna	Access to Hope (NGO) Disability Rights Activist
Panel Discussion	Mr Ketan Kothari	Managing Consultant -Program, St. Xavier's Centre for the Visually challenged (XRCVC)
Panel Discussion	Dr Kalpana Kharade	Adjunct Associate Professor K.J. Somaiya College of Education

Detailed Session Wise Summary

Sessions on Day 1 (December 15, 2022)

Inauguration

The inauguration ceremony began with the SNDT women's University song being rendered and the auspicious lighting of the lamp. The dignitaries on the dais were Chairperson NCW, Mrs Rekha Sharma, , Hon'ble Vice Chancellor SNDTWU Prof. Ujwala Chakradeo, Former Chairperson, RCI, Prof. Sudesh Mukhopadhyay and HOD, Department of Special Education Prof. Sujata Bhan.

Prof. Sujata Bhan gave her welcome address and introduced the audience to the concept of the national Seminar. She emphasized on the necessity of recognizing and supporting differently abled women. She commented on the double discrimination experienced by women with disabilities. Prof. Bhan suggested that there is a need to focus on the right based approach. She informed the audience that the objective of the seminar is to create a space to discuss various themes related to gender and disability.

The thought was carried further by our Hon'ble VC madam who shared her thoughts on the theme of the seminar. She spoke about unfolding the hidden aspects of women and bringing about change through education. She emphasized the need to strengthen women and the immense impact of this one strengthened woman on so many more women. She said the women should stand upright and not feel suppressed and in fact she should stand upright and support people around her. Madam VC concluded her speech by emphasizing that the focus should be on women led empowerment rather than on women empowerment.

The final thoughts of the inauguration were shared by Madam Rekha Sharma. She appreciated the efforts made by the Department of special Education in organizing the seminar and the importance of holding seminars on such topics. She began her address bringing to fore the current situation of women. She states how despite all the provisions and policies and efforts of various organizations or governments the condition of women has not improved. She spoke about how the perspective of disabled individuals varies based on their gender. Mrs. Sharma spoke about how society views women with disability as 'bechari' and how it is a completely unacceptable attitude/perspective.

She stated that empowerment of women with disabilities should be about freedom of thought and decision making. She touched upon how women with disabilities are exploited and experience violence at the hands of society. Madam Sharma emphasized on the need for family involvement to bring about change in perspective towards women in society. She stressed on the fact that everything starts from home so if family changes, only then society can bring about the change. She called for changes in the legislature to support changing perspectives. The address was concluded by discussing how women should be empowered and made self-dependent.

The vote of thanks was rendered by Dr Apoorva Panshikar, Assistant Professor, DSE SNTWU. She acknowledged the role of the National Commission of Women in supporting the organizing for such seminars. Rehabilitation Council of India was also acknowledged for accrediting the seminar with CRE status. She expressed gratitude on behalf of the department to Madam Chairperson of NCW and Hon'ble VC Prof. Ujwala Chakradeo for gracing the occasion by their presence and inspiring speech. She thanked various university offices for enabling the organizing of the seminar. She concluded her address by acknowledging the contribution of all involved in conducting the inaugural ceremony.



Session I – Keynote

Resource Person: Prof. Sudesh Mukhopadhyay

Topic: Women with Disability: Global Perspectives

The day started with the keynote address by Prof Sudesh Mukhopadhyay on the topic ‘Women with Disability: Global Perspectives’. She is a Former Chairperson, Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), Head of Department of Inclusive Education (NUEPA), Director, SCERT Delhi.

Prof Mukhopadhyay began her session expressing gratitude for having the opportunity of being back at the SNDTWU Juhu campus, as a well-wisher of the Department of Special Education. After addressing her fellow esteemed guests, Prof. Mukhopadhyay enlightened the participants by providing the inputs on the status of the women with disabilities (WwD) in India. The WwD in India is that of marginalization, neglect, and poverty. The global literacy rate for adults with disabilities is as low as 3 % and 1 % for women with disabilities. Prof Mukhopadhyay went on to address the background and her own reflections on Rights of Differently Abled Women (DAW). Some of which included points on what she has seen internationally and what the literature claims; and how as a nation and group of professionals, merely speaking of “weaknesses” isn’t ever going to be enough. The way forward, Prof Sudhesh added was to see the total picture and also realize that ultimately our strengths are our foundation. She questioned our excessive use of adjectives as human beings to classify ourselves. Classification is at the very core of our beings and in a room full of professionals she asserted, *“agar mein aap sab ko classify karne lagu, toh mujhe nahi pata woh classification kaha par rukegi”*. According to her, to classify people based on caste, gender, backgrounds, religion, ability, is all questionable. The terminologies and vocabulary we choose set the stage for the emotions we experience, since our emotions connect directly to the words we use, was emphasized by Prof. Mukhopadhyay.

Prof Mukhopadhyay said that ever since entering the field of Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities since 1983, she has still not been able to find the answer to the question on terminology that is most appropriate to be used - disabled, persons with disability, divyangjan, differently abled, or specially abled. She asked to reflect on the new terms used like, ‘twice-exceptional’ for people who may be gifted and also having some disability. Prof Sudesh added, that there could be persons who are ‘thrice exceptional’ which could be used for a woman coming from poor background, be talented and have a learning disability too. She highlighted that we should not get lost in terminology and labeling and said NEP 2020 (National Education Policy) also talks about special talent present in each child and how we teachers need to hone that. The Department of Education, for the very first time, made a document on ‘Talent Nurturing’ and circulated it throughout all ministries, including the RCI (Rehabilitation Council of India) and DEPWD (Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities). Therefore, women with disabilities should not be treated negatively but equally at par with women with no disabilities.

Some of the highlights of her session were; legal rights of women with disabilities, the double disadvantage of women with disabilities, and to build a positive image of WwD through education as most essential. The strategies to build a positive image of WwD include; education leading to employment and that would lead to true empowerment of WwD. She also brought out the role of the media to create a positive image of WwD. The WwD should have a sense of belonging in the community. They should be free to have control over their

life and be able to make their own choices. WwD should be empowered emotionally, socially, and economically. They have to be trained in decision making and provided opportunities to exercise their freedom and that will help them grow as persons with an identity and live a life of dignity.

Prof Mukhopadhyay went on to talk about the first global initiative that started in 1995 and how even in 2020, the global community will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995). The discourses present today are the same that were carried out back then. Albeit a five-year milestone will be reached towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 5 focusing on Gender Equality. 2020 is therefore a pivotal year for the accelerated realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, including women and girls with disability. (The-Status-of-Women-and-Girls-with-Disability-Australia.pdf.2020, P3).

In her first paper published in 1993 on Handicapped Women (terminology used at the time - read WwD) in which she mentions that more boys are born with disability and more girls are disabled by the time they reach age of 5, based on the analysis from UNICEF data. Boys born with congenital disabilities get a chance at rehabilitation whereas for girls even with acquired disabilities are often frowned upon by the parents and families; not only from the Indian point of view, but very much a global perspective. She stated that Among women, the woman with a disability is seen as inferior, and even among other people with disabilities she is not their equal. In fact, women with disabilities find themselves in a "Catch 22" situation, in which they are forced into being among the most isolated and marginalized. Thus they become the poorest of people, leaving them at increased risk of ill health.

She brought out an important observation. Women in poorer communities, and particularly those in the developing countries, appear to be more vulnerable to disability. A study, carried out in 1989 by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in six Asian and Pacific countries, showed a relatively higher incidence of disability among women between the ages of 15 and 44 when compared to men. Yet, overall, there are more disabled men than women. This could be explained by the fact that women in that particular age group suffer more from ill-health caused by too many pregnancies, inadequate post-natal health and medical care, and poor nutrition, all of which put them at greater risk of disability. That there are fewer women than men with disabilities, despite the fact that women generally live longer than men, may indicate that girls and women with disabilities simply receive less care and support than men, leading to earlier death.

Prof Mukhopadhyay also discussed the SDG Goals (Sustainable Development) and the need to recognize the potential of persons with disabilities as contributors to society and to enhance current efforts to mainstream their needs, rights and perspectives into the process of achieving the goals at all levels. Pointing out the section on Reduced Inequalities in SDG (2022), discrimination remains widespread, with women and persons with disabilities at heightened risk. In countries where disaggregated data are available, women are more than twice as likely as men to experience discrimination on the grounds of sex. Women with disabilities are two to three

times more likely to experience gender-based violence than women without disabilities (UN Department of Economics and Social Affairs). Moreover, women living in urban areas are slightly more likely to experience discrimination than their rural counterparts (SDG 10). Among persons with disabilities, it is pervasive, with about one third reporting personal experiences of discrimination. Every goal has gender indicators, but few goals do not have any gender indicators like Goal 12,14, 15,17. This further highlights the discrimination meted against women in general and why it needs to be addressed.

Prof Sudesh spoke about the challenges faced by WwD from a global perspective. Some observations were reported from around the world over specifically with the context of WwD. These are as under:

- Need for economic empowerment, poverty, poor self- esteem
- Lack of real time data and inclusive laws
- The Digital Exclusion of WwD
- Poor health facilities
- Lack of support for girls with disabilities as they transition to adulthood
- Poor access of services– ‘Reaching the most vulnerable’ during emergencies and conflicts

With numerous citations and various research references on the lives and challenges faced by WwD, Prof Mukhopadhyay concluded her session by observing that “to most disabled persons, the society they live in is a closed door which has been locked and the key to which has been thrown away by the others”. The statement highlights the apathy of society towards WwD. The discriminatory attitude towards WwD is seen all around. But we have to change this attitude. She further quoted Helen Keller in this context. Helen Keller, described this phenomenon in the following words: “Some people see a closed door and turn away. Others see a closed door, try the knob and if it doesn't open, they turn away. Still others see a closed door, try the knob and if it



doesn't work, they find a key and if the key doesn't fit, they turn away. A rare few see a closed door, try the knob, if it doesn't open and they find a key and if it doesn't fit, they make one!" These rare persons we have to find out."

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- https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/GSMA_Digital-Exclusion-of-Women-with-Disabilities_44pp_ACCESSIBLE.pdf, A study of Seven Countries, 2020 Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan and Uganda.
- <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/melinda-french-gates-if-you-invest-in-women-its-been-shown-time-and-time-again-they-invest-in-everyone-else-thats-what-lifts-up-the-family-8309878/?utm/> The Indian Express /7 Dec2022

Important Links

- <https://wwda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/The-Status-of-Women-and-Girls-with-Disability-Asutralia.pdf>
- https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/6th_session_report-Final.pdf/accessed 3 Dec.2022
- <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/Goal-10/2022>
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Session II

Resource Person: Prof. Vibhuti Patel

Topic: Gender at Work: Perspectives and Gap

The session II was delivered by Prof. Vibhuti Patel on the topic ‘Gender at Work: Perspectives and Gap’. She is the former head of the Post graduate Department for Economics at the SNDT Women’s University at Mumbai. She has also been associated with the Tata Institute of Social Studies.

Prof. Patel began her session by stating that though the rights of persons with disability are enshrined and protected through legislative acts as well as the Constitution of India, at an operational level, Persons with disabilities (PwDs) face hurdles on account of various barriers. She highlighted that with regards to Persons with Physical Disability, barriers go beyond physicality. In fact, every element that limits functioning and creates disability can be termed as a barrier. Whether it is physically inaccessible infrastructure, negative societal response, unsubstantial policies, or systematic ecosystem that obstructs certain people with some disadvantages because of which they are not able to avail all opportunities and face real-life barriers every day (WHO). These barriers may also include physical, social or account of inadequate policy support.

According to Prof. Patel, stereotypes, stigma, bigotry, and intolerance are the biggest promoters of discrimination of PwDs and possibly the most prominent obstacles against disability inclusion. She highlighted the fact that while every human faces some or the other hardship, for PwDs, these are more frequent occurrences and could potentially lead to longer lasting impact.

Prof. Patel then went on to share demographics on PWD from the 2011 Census Report. According to the Census Report, about 2.21% of India’s population has some kind of disability which means 2.68 crore (26.8 million) people in India are disabled. Out of total 62.32 crore male Indian citizens, there are 1.5 crore (15 million) disabled males wherein out of total 58.76 crore female Indian citizens, there are 1.18 crore (11.8 million) disabled females in India. A majority of these live in rural areas. About 69% of the overall disabled Indian population lives in rural which means about 1.86 crore (18.6 million) disabled people live in rural areas

and 0.81 crore (8.1 million) disabled people live in urban areas. It is estimated that about 50% of the PwDs fall in the age bracket of 20-50 years which are normally the prime working years for most people.

Prof. Patel pointed out the lack of visibility of this population subset in the general workforce. The demographics also shed light on the educational qualifications of PWD. In 2011, only 61% of the children with disability in the 5-19 age group were attending an educational institution. 27% of such children had never attended any educational institution ever. Among persons with multiple disabilities, 54% had never attended an educational institute. Overall, it is estimated that of the total population of PWD approximately 62% males are literate whereas only 45% of the affected women are literate. In terms of employability, Prof. Patel pointed out that only about 7.7% of the female disabled literate population are graduates (Disabled Population in India: Data and Facts, 2016).

She also touched upon the issue of allocation of funds from the Centre. She mentioned that in the last Union Budget approximately Rs. 740 crores had been allocated towards mental health and related issues. Allocation of funds at the grassroots level is often unsatisfactory due to a plethora of reasons such as inaction, lack of proposals for sanction of funds or simply being unaware of the various schemes offered by the State or Central government. This leads to underutilisation of allotted resources leading to negligible change on the field. As such funds allocated towards the inclusion of PwDs in the Annual Union Budget for 2021-22 was a mere 0.019%. An actionable point suggested by Prof. Patel said that there was an urgent need to sensitize corporators and other such members involved in local government bodies since funds are often distributed through their initiatives at the local level.

Prof. Patel then discussed the barriers that PwDs face viz. attitudinal, physical, educational, employment or health related. Several suggestions were put forth on how to reduce the impact of these barriers.

Attitudinal barriers

- May be intentional or accidental
 - Stereotypical notions like PwDs have a poor quality of life or are mentally less responsive because of their impairments are the most basic forms of barrier.
 - Myths and prejudices such as disability are past life's karma or assumptions that PwDs lack the ability to conduct themselves according to societal norms are also common types of attitudinal barriers
- Need to implement affirmative action, reserved quota in jobs, social protection and security measure judiciously
- Create awareness through media, reading and writing about the discrimination faced by PwDs and other sources to change mindset

Physical Barriers

- Non-availability of physical infrastructure such as ramps and railings etc to allow for easy access.
- Need to ensure that all new infrastructure, product, service or technology plans follow the principles of Universal Design to ensure accessibility for all.
- It is observed that several airlines do not allow PWDs to board the aircraft after issuing ticket so, we need to sensitize operating personnel at malls, airports etc so that physical mobility barriers and attitudinal barriers are minimized/reduced

Employment barriers

- Employment opportunities are a powerful tool for empowering the disabled population to lead a life with dignity.
- According to Prof. Patel, both public and private sector need to strengthen employment opportunities for PwDs
- Collective efforts needed to promote a conducive environment in public as well as private organizations for the sustained growth of persons with disabilities by accepting that disability doesn't mean that the person does not have talent or aptitude to do a certain work
- Diversity policies in hiring need to be implemented and should be regarded as a value addition and not simply a social responsibility initiative

Educational barriers

- Inclusive education is the key to the growth and independence of any individual or community and provides better opportunities for paid work
- Access to quality education to PwDs from underserved sections of society requires responsive budgeting at union, state and local self-government levels.
- The State should take the responsibility of developing special education sections in rural, tribal and urban areas with proper equipments and infrastructure
- Prof. Patel stated that training and sensitization should be provided to all stakeholders
- It is seen that girls with disability tend to face dual discrimination and intersectional vulnerabilities so, special attention needs to be paid to the training and education of girls with disability as they often face dual discrimination

Health facilities barriers at workplace

- Appropriate and timely access to health services is especially important for PwDs as proper medical intervention at the right time can make a difference between survival and fatality
- Health Departments need to emphasize on proper training of caregivers, co-workers.

- Modules on Rights of Persons with Disability and legal awareness about special provisions for employees with disabilities must be introduced or included in staff development programs, workers education programme, officers training workshops

Prof. Patel also emphasized on Disability and Disaster Management. She stated that disability is often stigmatized leading to persons with disabilities not being seen as active participants in emergencies. Further, the intersectional ties of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sex, religion and other multiple identities increase their discrimination and marginalization. Prof. Patel shares that women and girls with disabilities are particularly prone to violence during situations of conflict and natural disasters.

Prof. Patel educated the participants by sharing the guidelines and directives issued by the Central Public Works Department on disabled friendly infrastructure. Some of the key directives include guidelines on placement/height and size of signages, Braille, pictograms, tactile lettering, Lighting/Illumination, Specifications for lifts etc. Prof. Patel also shared that all the Indian Guidelines appear to have been adopted from international Standards and the source from where the specific information has been taken has not been mentioned.

According to Prof. Patel, there has been no authentic study undertaken in India, with respect to the accessibility needs of persons with different disabilities, keeping in mind the range of assistive devices/technologies being used, cultural aspects, terrains in rural/urban/hilly regions, etc.

Prof. Vibhuti Patel then went on to share the action agenda of National Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD). NCRPD was set up to work like a think tank and an idea center to mainstream disability issues and develop advocacy campaigns. The committee of UNCRPD is advocating for the inclusion of persons with disability in India's Vision 2030 framework and has been engaging in several consultations with various stakeholders for the same and demanding visibility of persons with disability in the statistics and indicators with special focus on gender disaggregated data. Prof. Patel also focused on 'The NITI Aayog', released the draft three-year action agenda for policy changes for the next three years starting from 2017-18 to 2019-20 on April 23, 2017.

The action agenda is the first of the three-part framework that NITI Aayog is developing: a Fifteen Year Vision, Seven Year Strategy and Three-Year Action Agenda documents. The main features of the draft are as under:

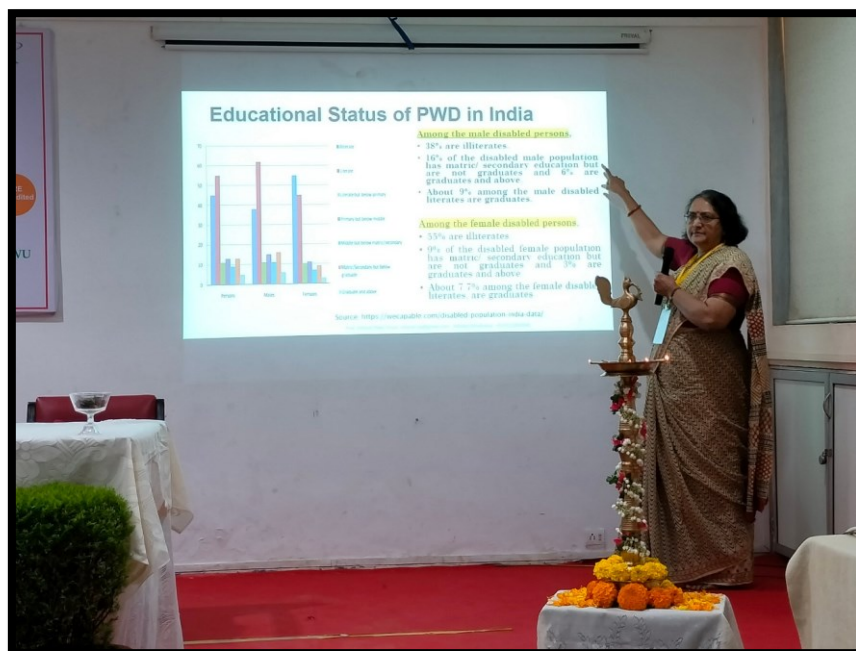
- Enhance employment opportunities for PWD. It is estimated that only 26% of the population with disability is a part of the active workforce. Most live their lives in poverty.
- The Government aims to bring about significant changes to labour laws that are in harmony with the RPWD Act 2016, the UNCRPD and the ILO Code of Practice 2002.

- Vacancy reservation for PWD in government sector to be amended from 3% to 4% in compliance with the RPWD Act.
- An urgent revamp of the special cells and employment agencies established for the benefit of PWD to make them effective, inclusive and barrier free.
- All relevant ministries engaged in skill development and employment generation to have a dedicated Disability cell to implement and monitor programs.
- Vocational training to be provided for PWD.
- Better monitoring of the data and programs implemented by MNREGA to ensure that PWD in rural areas are given work as per their abilities under the guidelines laid down.

Lastly, Prof. Patel touched upon the impact that natural disasters and calamities have on PwDs. During the disaster management planning stage itself, the specific needs of this group of persons are not taken into account. They are normally not involved in these planning sessions. This leads to poor and inadequate responses during emergencies. Women with disabilities face an intersectional disadvantage in such situations which magnifies the impact. Sensitivity is required in planning and implementation of disaster management programs.

She concluded by stating that civil society, government agencies and all other stakeholders must encourage the mainstreaming of PwDs as promised in the Sustainable Development Goals laid down by the United Nations and gave a quote.

‘No one is included until everyone is included...!!!’



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Important Links

- <https://www.newslaundry.com/2019/01/10/the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-act-is-an-ambitious-step-in-the-right-direction>
- <https://indiatogether.org/inclusion-benchmark-laws>
- <https://wecapable.com/disabled-population-india-data/>
- <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/towards-a-more-inclusive-and-empowering-world-measures-to-conquer-disability-barriers/?source=app&frmap=app=yes>.
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Session III

Resource Person: Prof. Anita Ghai

Topic: Disabled Women: An Excluded Agenda of Indian Feminism

The third session for the seminar was conducted by Prof. Anita Ghai on the topic Disabled Women: An Excluded Agenda of Indian Feminism. Prof. Anita Ghai being herself a person who is wheelchair bound and having been an activist for rights of persons with disabilities could throw more light on the rights of WwD. She started her session by highlighting the epistemology in terms of disability where she put her view that Disability is largely understood as Concessional Category. She mentioned and argued that even though Disability is considered a concessional category, people with disabilities have a lot to give back to society. Prof. Ghai discussed firstly about her journey as a woman with disability. She made a point that her own understanding of the issues in terms of women with disability and all the other related questions in the same field mainly arise and are influenced on the basis of her own experiences as a Indian Woman with Disability and thus advocating the efforts towards other disabled people in India. Her initial engagement with the issue of operation began as a negotiation by socio-cultural and political positioning as a woman in a traditional patriarchal society. She mentioned that she has worked and supported many women's movements and thus there is a feeling of sisterhood which is developed ultimately. But she also questioned this sisterhood because these women movements primarily serve as a response to the oppression experienced by the general women and excluding the women with disabilities. This is mainly because the structure of the society is designed in such a way that it does not listen to the voices raised by the persons with disabilities including women. Concluding on this discussion, she mentioned that she could now see that there was a shift in recent times from Women's Movements to Women's Movements with Disability.

Prof. Ghai shared her own experience with her family stressing on the fact that women with disabilities usually do not get support. This discussion was further supported by giving examples that sometimes the husbands of the women with disabilities also leave them because they are unable to cope with them. Secondly, she discussed how long a person can stay at one place with a woman with a disability, especially with a child because now the husband will have to support not one but two persons in the family. She concluded on this discussion by saying that inspite of all the human rights and laws, the women with disabilities have to go through the legitimate abuse quietly. She shared positive insights by giving an example where she shared a case about a girl who was raped by two security guards and got pregnant with the baby. However, the girl wanted to keep the baby and the Supreme Court after taking into consideration her case allowed the girl to keep the baby stating that the fetus of a girl with disability need not be aborted.

Prof. Ghai mentioned a strong fact, further, disability does not expect any condition and disability does not respect any locality. There can be circumstances where the people can suffer from disability on account of accidents/disasters. She questioned that if disability can happen to everyone or anyone then why is it that there is so much stigma there?

Prof. Ghai shared her own experience within her family where she was called names because of her disability and how her father encouraged and motivated her to be better in the future. She compared the way of treatment that she received to a boy in South India in 2019 which shows that even after so many years, the viewpoints of people towards the persons with disabilities are still unchanged. She illustrated this using the following case –

- She believed in providing equal importance to the caretaker as well as to the caregiver. She further stated that the caregiver should be heard but she emphasized that, “Have we ever asked the care recipient what care you need?” She cleared this point by relating to herself and said that “Wheelchair is part of my body. I don't want to be touched in that particular sense.”
- Prof. Ghai further connected this point where she spoke about how the violence against the women with disabilities is not spoken much about. She shared several cases where a poor girl was married off to a rich disabled boy. There was also a time when the Government of India, provided 25000 - 50000 rupees to marry off disabled girls/Women. She shared another case where the man took all the disabled women's money, house etc. and left her. In another case, a young girl was sent by her husband to a Gynecologist because they could not have intercourse and the Gynecologist was of the viewpoint that the girl shouldn't have gotten married in the first place which shows the attitude of the Gynecologist(people like that) towards the women with disabilities that has damaged many lives.
- Prof. Ghai shared another case where someone told the mother of a down syndrome child to take her to Mussoorie and make her stay in the cold which would lead her to death.
- Prof. Ghai further elaborated on the concept of interdependence. This was explained through the concept of caretaker and the care recipient as according to Prof. Ghai the roles of both the parties are equally important and hence they should be considered interdependent. She further discussed sexuality insisting that it is the basic need of every woman including the women with disabilities and if they want to conceive and have a child there is nothing wrong with the idea because it is a part of their needs as well and there is nothing wrong with having this desire. She ended her session with a quote by saying that **“We are not broken, don't fix us”** and further emphasized that **“Nothing for us, without us”**.



Session IV

Resource Person: Dr Anuja Gulati

Topic: Gender and Disability: A Double-Edged Sword

The fourth session for the day was conducted by Dr Anuja Gulati by enlightening us on the topic of "Gender and Disability: A Double Edged Sword". Dr Gulati started her session by explaining the magnitude of people that experience some form of disability during their lifetime. This was discussed by sharing the following statistics according to Report on disability 2011, WHO, World Bank Young persons with disabilities: Global study on ending GBV and realizing SRHR, 2018, UNFPA, Census, 2011 –

- One Billion people (15% of world's population) experience some form of disability during their lifetime.
- 180 Million young people 10-24 live with a disability- physical, mental, intellectual or sensory
- Women with disabilities account for one- fifth of the women worldwide.
- In India 11.8 Million women live with disabilities and constitute 44% of people living with disabilities in India.

Dr Gulati was of the viewpoint in terms of the above statistics that they do not provide justice in terms of actual struggle that they brought about by the Disability Right Movement of India. Before going forward with the actual definitions and understanding of Disability, she talked about how the people still consider Disability as an outcast and associates it with different kinds of myths and superstitions and also how the women with disabilities have to go through unnecessary abuse and where the family was considered as the only support. She discussed on how the status of the disability progressed around the different timelines:

- 1980s – This is the period during which the awareness about the different disabilities actually started to come into existence especially in India due to the Rehabilitation Council of India. She particularly mentioned here about the intellectual disability stating that it is still continued to be institutionalized.
- 1990s – The people with disabilities started advocating for their own rights. There were huge changes observed here because the Act for the Persons with Disabilities came up in 1995. She mentioned the different benefits of the Act in terms of reservations in Government Jobs, Educational Institutions, Discussion on Discrimination and so on.

Dr Gulati then elaborated on the definition given by United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability which said that disability is not an impairment and thus the Convention changed from Medical Model of Impairment to Social model that addresses societal, institutional and attitudinal barriers which suggests that an individual may have an impairment, but it is the disability which brings forth all these barriers with equal basis at people without disabilities. The Convention also had a huge shift from Philanthropy Model to Rights based model focusing on inclusion, dignity and equality. Dr Gulati discussed the definition given by RPWD Act 2016 - “person with disability” means a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his/her full and effective participation in society equally with others.

Dr Gulati then discussed how the Gender is viewed in society. She stated that Gender is a social construct. She created a link as to how the women are considered secondary and how they are always in a subordinate role mainly on account of the norms, expectations, roles, behaviors for men and women. She discussed that these gender norms are hierarchical, privilege what is masculine over that which is feminine and reflect and perpetuate inequitable power relations that are disadvantageous to women. These norms create a basis for discrimination more towards women with disabilities because they are believed to be the ones who cannot make decisions. She did not restrict to this but also said that Gender is not binary and that persons with alternate gender identities face further discrimination and marginalization.

Dr Gulati further elaborated on the multiple layers of discrimination with reference to Gender and Disability which she classified under, **Women, Disability, Women with Disabilities and Women with Disabilities in terms of Caste and Class**. The problems that were highlighted with respect to these were social isolation and exclusion, Neglect, exploitation and abuse, Lack access to social, economic and political opportunities, Face attitudinal, Institutional, socio environmental barriers, More likely to live in poverty, Limited access to information and services, Inability to understand needs. She further mentioned four important areas about how the women with disabilities are differently marginalized which are increased incidence of violence (physical and sexual) and disability specific abuse, compromised access to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) information and services, compromised availability of disability related support and services and compromised access to protection and other services during humanitarian crisis.

Dr Gulati elaborated on the various factors that contribute to the violence towards the women with disabilities as follows:

- Functional limitations and the need to get assistance
- Socialize into being agreeable and accept what others say to continue receiving the care without raising the voice.
- Easy targets for violence because they have a disability and they do not speak up.
- Structural barriers to access physical spaces like schools, hospitals, other public places.

She continued with this discussion by explaining the different forms of violence against the women with disabilities –

- Physical abuse - Women with disabilities are 2–4x more likely to experience intimate partner violence (Dunkle, et.al., 2018); Forced medical treatment, including the administration of drugs and electroshocks
- Sexual abuse- Women with disabilities 3x more likely to face sexual abuse.
- Economic abuse -Withholding access to medication and assistive devices; Denial of assistance, food or water, or threat to deny these needs, Restricting access to family, friends, and/or communication aids.
- Emotional abuse- Verbal abuse and ridicule relating to the disability

Dr Gulati further threw the light on how the access to Sexual & Reproductive Health (SRH) is compromised for the women with disabilities. The menstrual health needs of women with disabilities are poorly understood and addressed, placing them at a risk of adverse consequences. They are also least exposed to sexual knowledge, hence making them more vulnerable to sexual abuse. The main perception being that there is no need for this knowledge for the women with disabilities. When exposed to sexual abuse, the women with disabilities fail to address this taking a toll on their health leading to various health issues like increased risk of HIV/ STDs and unintended pregnancies. She mentioned how important the role consent has to play in terms of sexual relationships which usually is not considered for women with disabilities especially those with intellectual disabilities leading to forced sterilization, abortion and use of contraception. She concluded on this by saying that the women with disabilities are often denied relationships and to bear a child because the question is often raised on their capacity and the ability to do so.

Dr Gulati elaborated on how the compromises are made in terms of availability of disability related service and access to protection and other services during the humanitarian crisis. The access areas in terms of availability of services where the women with disabilities are usually compromised are - Public spaces, Reasonable accommodation for education, employment, mobility, health and protection services, Assistive devices, Access to interpreters, Denial of assistance and legal capacity to take life decisions. During the humanitarian crisis, the women and girls with disabilities are more at risk and humanitarian assistance is not

currently designed or delivered in an inclusive manner. Dr Gulati discussed the various barriers in accessing Gender Based Violence (GBV)/Sexual & Reproductive Health (SRH) which she classified into physical, social, environmental, institutional, financial and communication.

In response to all the above discussion, Dr Gulati shared the ways to respond to women survivors of violence living with disabilities such as –

- Not assuming woman with disability will not be able to provide history or give consent
- Ensuring free and informed consent is taken including from women with intellectual disabilities - examination, treatment and collection of evidence. If required, involve special educators, interpreters.
- Being sensitive to diverse needs of women with disabilities who are a heterogenous group and many more.

She also discussed the ways of inclusion of needs of women with disabilities in SRH Programs such as first person narratives to understand health and SRH needs of women with disability, establish dialogue with organizations working with women with disabilities, address disability in SRH policy and budgets and many more. She further discussed about the UNFPAs work on disability where the governments should –

- Consider the needs of people with disabilities in terms of ethical and human rights dimensions.
- Eliminate discrimination that persons with disabilities may face with regard to reproductive rights, household and family formation.
- Recognize specific health needs of persons with disability including reproductive and sexual health, family planning, HIV/AIDS, etc.

Dr Gulati shared UNFPA India's work on women with disabilities with respect to the areas such as –

- Training of special educators on imparting life skills to adolescents with disabilities and transaction of life skills in schools for persons with disability- Odisha in collaboration with KISS.
- Establishment of an innovation center for excellence – For introduction and innovation around assisted technologies- Odisha in collaboration with Department of SSEPD.
- Supported compilation of insights and good practices on menstrual health and hygiene management for women with disabilities
- Hackathon for ideating and innovating solutions on addressing key knowledge gaps and enabling access to services for Persons with Disabilities experiencing Gender Based violence

The session ended by discussing the way ahead to reduce this discrimination against gender and disability. Some points that were mentioned by following the guiding principle of the Sustainable Development Goals- Leave no one behind, understanding lived realities of women with disability to assess needs and concerns, designing programmes based on principles of human rights, implementing all programs based on principles of Inclusion, equality and respect for dignity, recognizing legal capacity of persons, especially women with disabilities on an equal basis with others, creating opportunities for community based rehabilitation.



References

- Article 11 of the CRPD: Take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence.
- Article 12 of UNCRPD: Persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life” and calls for full access to the support they need to exercise this right.
- Articles 15 and 16 of UNCRPD: Prohibit violence, abuse and inhuman and degrading treatment against all persons with disabilities
- Article 25 of UNCRPD: Provide persons with disabilities with the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable health care and programmes as provided to other persons, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health and population-based public health programmes.
- Film by Noida Deaf Society about Views on Menstruation by Women with Disab
- Report on disability 2011, WHO, World Bank Young persons with disabilities: Global study on ending GBV and realizing SRHR, 2018, UNFPA Census, 2011

Sessions on Day 2 (December 16, 2022)

Session V

Resource Person: Adv. Kanchan Pamnani

Topic: Women with Disabilities and The Indian Legal Framework

The first session for day two was started by resource person Adv. Kanchan Pamnani, Solicitor and Human Rights Activist on Women with Disability and Indian Legal Framework. She delivered a session on 'Women with Disabilities and The Indian Legal Framework'. She started the session by stating the fact that, Women with disabilities are women and also Indians. Thus, she started the session first with the rights as being an Indian then as a woman and thirdly as a woman with a disability. Keeping this approach in mind she did not start with the RPwD act but by explaining the broad contours of how people with disabilities fit into the world. With this in mind she began with the constitution of India which is the paramount law. After constitution law comes two U.N conventions- CEDAW and UNCRPD which we are subject to but being a sovereign nation, nobody can call us for the committee hearing and thus no complaint can be reported. After the above two, there follows various acts and special laws e.g.- RPWD act, IPC, POSH. She explained how under various laws there are rules followed by regulations, guidelines and circulars. Individuals outside the legal system are dealing with this framework. She emphasized on understanding the India legal framework for everybody, she gave an example of how if one is in the corporate sector the constitution will come first, followed by Company act, SEBI act and so on.

She further went into the depth of the constitution and the article 14,15, 16 and 19. She explained in article 14 which is the most important article why a special law for people with disabilities and special for women with disability is present. She told how article 14 is just not on paper but present in real as well. She went ahead and mentioned article 21 which states of life and liberty, she connected this article to disability by saying how PWDs are denied jobs, but article 21 comes through for the said rights. Every right has a condition to it and thus behaving self is necessary. 14, 19 and 21 are fundamental and everything comes from there. Article 15 and 16 talks about discrimination based on different goods. It mentions reservation for women in the panchayat system. Free choice is provided to everyone. Everything comes from the constitution and how everything comes from it.

No one can put restrictions, limitations and conditions to live.

CEDAW- convention from 1979, which is very important in India. Any injustice against a woman with disability is an injustice against women. This convention defines what constitutes against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. India ratified CEDAW on 9th July 1993. Defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

- Part I (Articles 1–6) focuses on non-discrimination, sex stereotypes, and sex trafficking.
- Part II (Articles 7–9) outlines women's rights in the public sphere with an emphasis on political life, representation, and rights to nationality.
- Part III (Articles 10–14) describes the economic and social rights of women, particularly focusing on education, employment, and health. Part III also includes special protections for rural women and the problems they face.
- Part IV (Article 15 and 16) outlines women's right to equality in marriage and family life along with the right to equality before the law.
- Part V (Articles 17–22) establishes the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as well as the states parties' reporting procedure.
- Part VI (Articles 23–30) describes the effects of the convention on other treaties, the commitment of the state's parties and the administration of the convention.

First Convention of 21st Century

India ratified this convention on 1st October 2007

The Article 6 speaks of Women with disabilities,

1. States Parties recognize that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple discrimination, and in this regard shall take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by them of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.
2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the present Convention.

She explained how the Committee is concerned about multiple and intersecting discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities

- The disability stereotypes and stigmas and lack of awareness about multiple and intersecting discrimination against women and girls with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities and those living in rural areas, and the lack of inclusion of women with disabilities in general and disability-inclusive policies
- The lack of gender-responsive policies and budgeting, and the absence of disaggregated information by gender concerning equal enjoyment of and access to all rights and services, in all areas of life, by women and girls with disabilities
- Barriers to the participation and involvement of women with disabilities in policymaking processes.

She explained what committee recommends-

- Strengthen measures to address multiple and intersecting discrimination against women and girls with disabilities
- Adopt national and state action plans for promoting equality and the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in all areas of life.
- Establish gender-responsive policies and budget allocations at the national and state levels.
- Ensure the full and effective participation of women with disabilities in decision and policy making at all levels.

Going forward she spoke about the Rights of Persons with Disability act.

- No discrimination is the base of the act. RPWD came in December 2016. A lot of discussion was done on this act.
- The appropriate Government and local authorities shall ensure that all children with disabilities shall have the right on an equal basis to freely express their views on all matters affecting them and provide them appropriate support keeping in view their age and disability.
- The government should provide support to women with disabilities for livelihood and for the upbringing of their children.
- Priority should be given to women with benchmark disabilities in the reservation and allotment of agricultural land, housing, and in all poverty alleviation and various developmental schemes and programmes.
- Out of the ten Members nominated in the Central and State Advisory Boards at least five should be women.

The highlight was equal treatment and rights for PWD, she gave an example of how the entrance should be inclusive from the front door for all rather than a ramp or provision done at the back of the building.

She elaborated how violence can look for people with disability and it goes beyond abuse and encompasses how taking away livelihood by not providing facilities.

The following are redressal measures under the act-

- Commissioner of Disabilities- State and National
- Special court
- Police and Executive magistrate
- High Court and Supreme Court
- Grievance Cell

Later, she focused on how different laws are applicable when it comes to women and inheritance depending on the religion they come from. Women and women with disabilities have to fight for their rights of inheritance based on the religious law followed.

She mentioned how the legal system gives assistance by getting evidence at home and when a person needs assistance, that is provided too. At times problems come when a woman with a disability does not want to reveal or doesn't know how to. This is when assistance and support is most needed by family and system. She emphasized that women with disabilities should be treated with the same trust and respect. For instance, the person should be trusted to handle their own finances.

She shared her personal experience of how she was scared initially and how she overcame and reached where she is today.



Session VI

Resource Person: Dr A.L. Sharda

Topic: Role of Media and perception of Disability

The session by Dr A.L. Sharda was on the topic 'Role of Media and perception of Disability'. The session started by laying the foundation on how the media treats and handles disability. She elaborated on how media can act as a powerful tool that can reach millions of people by the way of advertisements. She urged the audience that as people engaged in advocacy it is very important to partner with the media to help reinforce thoughts and ideas.

Dr A.L. Sharda stated that there are very few advertisements where people with disability are shown as being part of the society. Talking about the role of media she pointed out that media tends to perpetuates the stereotypes, stigma and fears related to disability and presented some examples of movies where persons with disability are portrayed in stereotypical fashion either as villains (Shakuni and Mandhara), or as comic relief (Golmaal 2), and or as a dependent (Dosti).

Unintentionally promoting the stigma of disability, movies like Dhawan and Sholay portray disability as an outcome of a past sin or something that is worse than death. There is also the portrayal of Persons with disability as an aberration that needs to be fixed.

Dr A L Sharda stated that in contrast to the negative portrayal there are also movies that depict disability as a human condition. Dr Sharda listed a few movies that present the realistic depiction of disability such as Koshish, Sparsh and Margarita with a Straw and urged the participants of the seminar to watch these movies.

She continued the dissection of the role of media in the field of disability by highlighting the aspect of creating awareness. She spoke about movies like Paa, Taare Zameen Par and Main Aisa Hi Hoon. She brought to light how a good commercial movie can create widespread awareness about a particular disability and keep society informed about its issues.

Dr Sharda then led the audience in a journey to understand the positive impacts of films on disability movement and their contribution in bringing about change in the lives of persons with disability. She referred to movies such as ‘Taare Zameen Par’ that highlighted learning disability resulting in special provisions for children with disability while writing their exams. She stated that the movie ‘Main Aisa Hi Hoon’ influenced disability law, particularly the vocabulary to be used and that the movie ‘Sparsh’ led to important policy changes and the establishment of the central braille press in Dehradun.

Dr Sharda also spotlighted the portrayal of disability in advertising, she spoke about the categorization of advertisements based on how disability is depicted. This point was further illustrated through the viewing of clips of various short films, advertisements and visuals.

Under the category titled “If they can, why can’t you?” ; the Savlon ad was shown. This advert presents a day in the life of a foot and mouth artist Swapna in a bid to promote hand washing. With a brilliant and eye-opening message the advert conveys the underlying message ‘if I can why can’t you?’

Another advertisement in the same category features the triple amputee Tinkesh Kaushik. The ‘Fitr Fitness app’ advert shows Tinkesh asking the audience that ‘if he can work on his body why can’t they’. The nature of this kind of underlying message is problematic as such adverts start off with a good intention but the underlying message implies the persons with disability as being lesser than those who are considered neurotypical in society.

The second category of advertisements that she spoke of was promotion of disability related products and services. Promotion of a prosthetic limb with sensory perception by Cadburys on the occasion of Rakhi, disabled friendly packing of burgers by Mc Donald’s and India Enabled, calling the dreamers and explorers among the disabled by MakeMyTrip were some of the examples of advertisements that were shared and discussed.

The third category of advertisements that was discussed was Special occasion Ads where adverts such as the one for Joyalukkas that highlights the wedding of a female wheelchair user and a Bollywood actress presenting her with a necklace. This ad with its underlying message to normalize disability, shows a Bollywood smitten young girl dreaming of having an actress at her wedding. The Zomato advertisement for Valentine's Day featuring young lovers a hearing-impaired young man and his girlfriend. Dr Sharda stressed on the fact that such advertisements bring about a change in the thought process of the audience and how they view persons with disability.

The fourth category of advertisements that was discussed was adverts that present the concept of persons with disability as role models. Ads for EbixCash features a javelin thrower and amputee who becomes a role model for young children with disabilities. There is an advert that features a disability rights activist and highlights her challenges and triumphs. An inspirational human-interest story, such advertisements highlight and emphasize success stories. According to Dr Sharda such adverts encourage persons with disabilities to look forward to life and inspires them to be whatever they want to be and provides inspirations to the parents who also can look forward to a bright future for their own children.

Other types of advertisements that were displayed and discussed were empowering images and people with disabilities in families and friendships where GoodDay features a blind person and his interaction with family and friends, again with the underlying message of normalizing disability. The KFC advert highlights the friendships between a hearing-impaired person and a person without disability, Nescafe ad featured a stand-up comedian with a stammer.

Keeping in mind all the various types of advertisements that have so much power to change minds and reach thousands of people, she stressed on the fact that good media communicates that people with disabilities have the right to do what they want to do and be where they want to be. Dr Sharda advised all the participants to take the media very seriously, collaborate and work with them.

The session concluded by signifying that it is important to free the people with disabilities from perceptions and see them for their actions and let them speak for themselves.



Session VII

Resource Person: Dr Madhura Nagchoudhuri

Topic: Strategies to Develop a Positive Image of Gender and Disability

The session on Strategies to Develop a Positive Image of Gender and Disability was delivered by Dr Madhura Nagchoudhuri. Dr Nagchoudhuri started her talk by stating that disabled people are stereotyped in pervasive and consistent ways. To illustrate this, she indicated that we find stereotypical beliefs across cultures, states, geographical regions (rural – urban). Similarly, in mythology the disabled people are either portrayed as villains (e.g., Shakuni in Mahabharata) or superhuman. The persistence of the stereotypes is due to the deep-rooted beliefs that are grounded in religion, religious beliefs, traditions, and media representations. These create negative images and stereotypes about disabled people. Drawing from various religions like Hinduism and Buddhism, Dr Nagchoudhuri enumerated the various beliefs that explain the cause of disability. She iterated that according to many religions; disability is related to ‘sins of past life/lives’ of a person with disability. Since many religions believe in the philosophy of Karma, and that disability is an outcome of the bad deeds in our life, it leaves little scope to view persons with disability favourably. Hence, disability is negatively portrayed in mythology. Extending her argument that disability is stereotyped, Dr Nagchoudhuri showed how the beliefs are prevalent in countries outside India. Citing from Nigerian belief system, she said that in Nigeria, it is believed that disability is caused by many factors - curse of god, ancestral violations of societal norms, offenses against the gods of the land, breaking laws and family sins, misfortune, being witches

and wizards, and adultery. In the Judeo- Christian faith, disability is related to the sins committed by parents of persons with disability.

Speaking about the negative portrayal of disability in the Indian mythology, Dr Nagchoudhuri referred to many examples e.g., Shakuni mama from Mahabharata had a locomotor disability communicating that people with disability can be cunning); Dhritarashtra from Mahabharata- was visually impaired (who was responsible for the Mahabharat); the maid from Ramayan, Manthara had locomotor disability and she was responsible for sending Ram into exile (so is bad); Shurpanakha from Ramayana who was a Kubja was foolish and pitiful. Thus, many negative adjectives are associated with disability. On the other hand, people with disability are also considered superhuman, e.g., Ashtavakra (a revered vedic sage having eight deformities) is a highly learned sage.

There is also a myth that persons with visual impairment have a sixth sense...which is not true. The visually impaired are trained to use their other senses well. Continuing to elaborate on the negative perceptions of people with disability, she gave examples to illustrate that disability is associated with terms like ‘dependent’, ‘burden on society and family’, ‘weak’, ‘helpless’, ‘victims’. Specifically referring to persons with intellectual disability, or persons with mental illness, the word ‘Weird’ implying that the person is unpredictable and dangerous is often used. In the context of employment and work life, a negative stereotype and perception is that a person with disability cannot work or will remain absent more frequently.

Particularly in the context of women with disability, Dr Nagchoudhuri said that the women with disability are considered to be “asexual” and thus they cannot get married. They (women with disability) are not capable of being wives, mothers, or homemakers due to their functioning bodily differences as compared to non-disabled women. This is quoted from research by Addlakha in 2008. Disabled women will give birth to disabled children only, is another belief.

Moving further from how people with disability with a particular sex are viewed, the speaker highlighted that gender plays an important role in the way persons with disability are perceived. Women with disabilities face multiple marginalization based on gender and disability as well as other aspects such as caste, religion and so on.

The next point for deliberation was how the negative images or stereotypes impact the people with disabilities. The first effect of negative stereotypes is that it leads to exclusion for the person with disability from participating in social, economic, and political life. Secondly, they experience discrimination, abuse and being bullied. There exists a lot of stigmatizations where people with disability are hidden from society and this is especially more for women with disability. Disabled people experience difficulty in accessing resources and facilities for health, education, employment, etc. Reduced access to police and justice systems more so for women with disabilities. Citing from research by WDIN (2019), Dr Nagchoudhuri elaborated that the women with disability frequently face humiliation at the police stations and hospitals and thus have very limited access

to the justice system. The cause of this is that there is a stigma associated with their disability and sexuality. For women with disabilities, the challenge in getting justice increases as they are excluded from two important interest groups that they actually belong to – disability rights movement and also women's movement. Here, Dr Nagchoudhuri quoted from the works of Ghai (2006).

Target group for interventions and change

After ascertaining the challenges experienced by people with disability in general and women with disability in particular, Dr Nagchoudhuri propounded that the concerns need to be addressed at multiple levels – family, community, specific groups, children, youth, in schools or at university level. She listed the service providers and professionals who come in contact and assist persons with disability -these include the police, justice system, school/college, administrations, staff, teachers, media professionals, local government and local administrations. The speaker said that these groups of individuals require to be sensitized. This can be achieved using many strategies. The key is to provide opportunities for experiential learning and getting information.

Strategies for change, experiential learning and providing information

Elaborating on the strategies, Dr Nagchoudhuri said that the isolation and exclusion of persons with disabilities over time has led to lack of exposure resulting in feelings of fear/incompetence about them. This can be tackled by clarifying misconceptions which may vary across different disabilities (some were listed in the earlier section). Another strategy is providing community education. This is the key to breaking negative stereotypes and creating a positive image among the population. It can be done through groups, in communities or neighborhoods. The strategies for attitudinal changes can be grouped into three categories viz. (1) Contact or interaction with persons with disability, (2) Providing information, and (3) Experiential learning opportunities using role plays, simulation games etc. The aim of these strategies is to develop complete acceptance and integration of disabled people into all facets of daily living – giving equal opportunities, proper accommodations, participation in recreational activities, social activities and travel.

When applying the strategy of contact and interaction, we need to create opportunities for meeting between a disabled persons and non-disabled persons where both are equal. When interacting on a common platform, non-disabled people must be guided about the ways of interacting with disabled people. The focus must be on what people 'can do' rather than focusing on their limitations or what they 'can't do'. This can be ensured by emphasizing on the positive attributes of the disabled people.

Information giving is an important strategy since lack of information and knowledge creates barriers. Thus, information if personalized will help immensely. Information helps clarify misconceptions. Information provision as a strategy can be effective if the information is made relevant to the receivers, is provided by credible sources (e.g., a person with disability him/herself), presented in an interesting manner and by keeping it simple. Moreover, focusing on strengths and abilities of the disabled people is preferred.

Experiential learning provides opportunities for participants to share their feelings and reactions through role play, discussions, simulation games/exercises, group projects. Community education programs need to bring about positive and meaningful contact with PWD and the larger community since isolation is the breeding ground for myths and stereotypes.

The effectiveness of the said strategies can be enhanced by following certain guidelines, suggested Dr Nagchoudhuri. The efforts must be continual and not a one-time effort. Having done this, the possibility of breaking the deep-rooted stereotypes will increase. Repeated discussions and continuous community education programmes will help the public understand the layers related to gender and disability and other aspects of marginalization. Since isolation is a breeding ground for myths and stereotypes, if possible, we need to ask people with disabilities who can speak positively and represent them effectively not as “heroes or exceptional people” but as an empowered individual. Women with disabilities need more representations to counter dual types of stereotypes i.e., related to their gender and sexuality as well as their disability. Community educators need to start with language used by the people to describe disabilities. People/communities have to be helped to overcome their reluctance or feelings of inadequacy in relation to interacting with Persons with Disability.

While concluding the talk, the speaker Dr Nagchoudhuri iterated that it is not easy to break stereotypes which has been around for years but to break negative stereotypes, a counter method is needed (need to be constant).



References

- (Addlakha, 2008)
- (Ghai, 2006)
- (Haller, 2000)

- (WDIN,2019)
- (Wolfson & Norden, 2000)

Session VIII

Resource Person: Dr Sushama Nagarkar

Topic: Employment of Women with Disabilities: A Solution-Focused Approach

The fourth session for the day was conducted by Dr Sushama Nagarkar on 'Employment of Women with Disabilities: A Solution-Focused Approach'. She commenced the session by naming all the 21 disabilities mentioned in RPWD Act 2016. She explained the terms 'intellectual and developmental disabilities' such as down syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, and so on. She gave a brief overview on the current statistics in India which showed the level of problems faced by people with intellectual and developmental disability. According to the data available upto three percent of India's 1.39 billion population lives with some form of intellectual or developmental disability such as autism and Down syndrome. This group, persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (PWIDD), continues to be excluded from India's mainstream development narrative despite laws that recognize and protect their rights. They are stigmatized and widely considered less deserving of opportunities for education and employment (Dasra, 2019).

The second point Dr Nagarkar focused on was the double discrimination of gender and disability. She mentioned that according to the UN disability and development report, 2018, Women with Intellectual and Developmental Disability (WwIDD) are one of the world's most marginalized sections of society due to the double discrimination of gender and disability. The gaps begin during school enrolment and educational attainment and carry on through the life span. Additionally, they are at heightened risk of suffering from violence - often of a sexual nature. It is very important for them to get the right that they deserve and what they have.

After stating the problems and difficulties faced by Women with Intellectual and Developmental Disability, Dr Nagarkar gave insights on 'Solution-Focused Approach', that is:

A solution-focused framework is a future-oriented, goal-directed approach to solving human problems of living. It is a strengths-oriented practice model that identifies and enhances clients' resources for coping with life's difficulties. Solution-focused therapy arose from the field of family therapy, although several social workers were key to its development. An essential family therapy concept, which is also heavily rooted within social work, involves a systemic notion of causality that a change in one part of a routine sequence will result in further change for the system. Solution-focused therapy is a collaborative approach in that workers and clients are seen as partners in the change process. Conversations between worker and client, stimulated by key questions, are a pathway to changes in client perception, subsequent behavior, and the responses of other people to these small changes. Behavioural, as well as perceptual, change is implicated since the approach is

focused on concrete, specific behaviors that are achievable within a brief time period. Solution-focused therapy has attracted attention internationally and is used for a variety of problems of living throughout the world. At YCT as stated by Dr. Nagarkar they work collaboratively with the individual who arrives at a solution that is pragmatic and realistic to fit their needs. Action plans are made that work well according to the needs of the clients.

Dr Nagarkar also suggested some points that we should focus on when we think about Women with Intellectual and Developmental Disability. There are certain assumptions that needs to be focused on and they are: that Individuals have the motivation, resources and strengths to solve their problems, the individuals' positive qualities are evident, and general competence can be accomplished, it is important to understand and focus on what people can do rather than what they can't do. There should be more effective solutions as they will improve the quality of life.

Dr Nagarkar mentioned Yash Charitable Trust (YCT). Yash Charitable Trust is an NGO based in Mumbai. It was 200 sq.ft space initially when it was started. YCT was established in 2014 with the mission to enhance the quality of life for persons with developmental disabilities. It was started with the aim to create opportunities for people with special needs to work and for their satisfaction. The organization provides persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities opportunities to learn the required life skills, earn a livelihood, develop social relationships, and meaningfully participate in the community.

She mentioned some of the core values of YCT which are acceptance, respect, inclusion and empowerment. The value of acceptance allows us to accept reality, ourselves, and others as the way each of us truly is. By accepting where they were- economically backward, educated, non – educated etc. Major importance is given to this value, as they believe in mutual respect. Acceptance helps them to treat another with the same degree of respect that we would like to be treated. They wait, listen, try and understand the needs of the Adults with disabilities. Inclusion value helps them to create a supportive energy and commitment from others. There is a sense of belonging. By adopting a core value of empowerment, they are helping our team members find their voice.

They all are given opportunities to make their choices. Dr. Nagarkar very rightly stated that we as individual do get choices from which we select the option that we want and the consequence could be positive or negative, right or wrong then it should be given to the adults with disability also, its fine to given them opportunity to make their choice as far as they are safe.

The Vision of her trust is PwIDD live and work in the community of their choice with dignity and self-respect wherein Mission is to provide skill development, training, and livelihood opportunities through the Skilling & Supported Employment Program (SSEP) and to provide all support necessary to navigate the adult world through the Adult Support Kendra (ASK). Through the Skilling & Supported Employment Program (SSEP) the activities conducted

are:

1. Skill Development Centre (SDC)
2. Café Arpan and
3. Arpan Food Services

Through the Adult Support Kendra (ASK) the activities conducted are:

1. Counseling & hang out groups
2. Employment Support Services and Awareness
3. Training and advocacy for which there are workshops, seminars that are conducted.

YCT's Approach:

People come to YCT to enroll in the programme of their choice. There are two programs as mentioned above – SSEP and ASK. The skilling programme focuses on training in Art skills that are related to the food business and soft skills which are required at many workplaces. The focus is given more on a Strength-based (solution-focused) approach, that is they focus on what the person can do, and not on what they cannot do because of their disability.

They encourage student's self-determination, work on their self-advocacy skills as these skills increase chances of being successful in making the transition to adulthood, including employment and independence. They are person-centered, hence focus more on the person, focus on their strengths and work on their weaknesses.

YCT's Process:

In the intake process there are interviews that are conducted and get to know the person and they are oriented about the options that are available for them. After the enrollment the adults have to join Skill Development Centre (SDC) - if they choose to do so. Then they are trained through the training, post which the internships are offered and placement if vacancies are available.

Dr Nagarkar gave many examples of WwIDD, walking us through their stories in a video format. The story of one of their successful employees named Arti, who was trained in their skill development programme was also shared. She is very kind and compassionate, and has a great sense of humour. She is always open to learning and work, very social, enjoys interacting with people and is very musically inclined.

She mentioned how the approach works best in real life situations and the challenges that were faced by them, from which some they have overcome and some that are faced till date like low expectations, safety concerns, travel, etc. Dr Nagarkar also shared about the employment details of their clients, and they are as follows: there are 22 PwIDD employed by YCT out of which 6 are women. There are over 50 registrations in

Employment Support Services, amongst which there are 5 women and YCT serves 137 PwIDD in various programs, and 21 percent of it are women.

Dr. Nagarkar mentioned the services provided by them at YCT which were counseling, life skill, family consultation and social skill development. Lastly, Dr Nagarkar ended the session with the quote,

"What is the greatest and most precious thing in the world? I say to you.

Tis people, tis people, tis people."

~ Maori proverb



References

- (Dasra,2019)
- UN disability and development report, 2018

Session IX Panel Discussion

Moderator: Dr Putul Sathe

Resource Person: Ms Jasmina Khanna, Mr Ketan Kothari and Dr Kalpana Kharade

Topic: Our Lives Our Identity

The day two ended with the Panel Discussion on 'Our Lives Our Identity' where the moderator was Dr Putul Sathe, Head in Charge, Associate Professor Research Centre for Women's Studies (RCWS) SNDTWU and the Panelists were - Ms Jasmina Khanna, Access to Hope (NGO) Disability Rights Activist; Mr Ketan Kothari,

Managing Consultant -Program, XRCVC & Dr Kalpana Kharade, Adjunct Associate Professor, K.J. Somaiya College of Education.

The discussion put forth by Ms Khanna emphasized on her struggle trying to defy BMC for the establishment of accessible roads, footpaths and public toilets in Mumbai. She discussed her goal to make the city accessible by 2027. She was very firm in her discussion stating that not to separate the people with disabilities since they are not in this world for charity.

Mr Ketan Kothari elaborated on the concept of Inclusive Education. He elucidated that inclusive means the beginning of a new journey for a child when he is being put in a regular class. Mr Kothari was also of the opinion that accessibility plays an important role in inclusive education, and it is important to think about inclusion every day. He concluded his views by saying that Disabled people should be seen with the elite of society because only then can they be seen in society. Inclusive does not mean to put the child in a regular class but it's the beginning of the journey. Inclusive education can only be successful with all the support services, infrastructure and resources to create an inclusive setup. Accessibility plays an important role in

Inclusive education. Think about inclusion daily. Inclusive is both communities accepting each other. Disabled people should be seen with the elite of society because only then can they be seen in society. Mr Ketan Kothari elaborated on the concept of Inclusive Education. He elucidated that Inclusive means the beginning of a new journey for a child when he is being put in a regular class. Mr Kothari was also of the opinion that accessibility plays an important role in inclusive education, and it is important to think about inclusion every day. He concluded his views by saying that disabled people should be seen with the elite of society because only then can they be seen in society. Educational spaces that we all talk about are inclusive education now. Unfortunately, how much ever means inclusive education for those who talk. He realized that not for the blind but for all disabilities.

At Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged we have an inclusive set up where he works. But the problem is that in many cases and wherever he has gone people say put him in regular class so once you put regular class then it will be over. When you put the child actually the old therapy begins, and he assures us that education cannot be cheated. It is spend more you will spend more than the person will take of his or her if given a good environment. We want to be educated regularly because it makes us more economically and socially because we can afford it and socially because there is no use of excluding such a large population.

India in the 1700s where we were also in regular school and the University of Mumbai, so the problem that always came was that inclusiveness can only succeed if given support. Have to be extremely strong in order to achieve, especially those who come from middle or lower class. Parents will not have time and many of them work on a daily basis. You can expect them to come for a training program. If they come, what about their earnings so we will have to divide the government and change.

Today you have a department of special education which is organizing the seminar. How many of you thought that should be part of a curriculum that is designed for the teachers, even if its blindness is not taken seriously. For example, if teaching blind you need braille and life skills. Things which are taken for granted. Mother who is protective won't let me use gas but my wife who is blind is expected to use everything. What is the purpose of inclusiveness because we need to create an inclusive society and that is why we are stuck. Every time we get new names, some call every 10 years - Divyang, visually changed, visually impaired but in the end he says he is blind. he doesn't mind even if we call him Andha or blind. What he means is people need to give thought that philosophies and debates may continue but special skills which need to be taught in an inclusive environment are important. He doesn't see enough effort being made as long as it should have. Here the disabled student and so-called able body now people want to use all these labels. He gave certain examples and spoke about how he is treated in his environment. He shared an instance where he was called Andha by his watchman but in spite of being called Andha that watchman helped him whenever he offered the help. The reason he shared this example is to make People aware that no matter what label we give them, in the end it matters how we treat them. He gave another example of his WhatsApp status: someone called him divine, and he says he is not divine. The problem is he feels he is so divine that a bus goes in front of him and he doesn't know which one it is. He is asking someone, and they ask oh you want to go. Here the society is not aware. They are more aware of what kind of words will hurt us but the important thing is attitude towards us. Inclusive can only succeed – inclusive education and other accessibility. Nothing will work without accessibility. Unless teachers know how to deal with the disabled children in the class the whole thing will all patch. He urges all of them to please keep accessibility in our mind and try to be ambassadors for people with disabilities wherever we go. Radical empathy should always be there. Anybody can get disabled. Lifespan is 70 years. Disability is no longer a 3rd party, it can happen to everyone, so accessibility needs to be designed and in fact have such labelist discussion. We feel bad when you call such good names and do any work in the factor so that is where the problem lies. Let us all think inclusive as part of our daily routine. At Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired work for all disabilities. He thinks it is a challenge but that is the welcome challenge then not working for all the disabilities at all and not only constricted to the visually impaired. In his case gender never played a role but caste did. He emphasized that if the general caste takes efforts in the next 50 years India will change.

The third panelist Dr Kalpana Kharade discussed inclusion with reference to the teacher community. Her discussion revolved around the training of inclusion for the teacher community because she believed that without the teachers being empowered with inclusive education, implementation of the same is highly impossible. Because it's the teacher who will screen and identify students with difficulty in her class. It's very important to provide teacher trainee knowledge of inclusion with practical experience. She also mentioned that teachers need to be empowered with inclusion pedagogy. Which will help teachers to provide equal opportunities to all the students in class and will avail students with special needs to get all the concessions

which will help them achieve their goals. Dr Kharade concluded her session by signifying that a positive family background is another key to overcome challenges to imbibe a positive inclusive belief.

Dr Sathe was astonished after she heard the panelists sharing their personal experiences. Some have faced difficulty in the past wherein some have brought a change and made a difference. She pointed out that people with disabilities are invisible and marginalized in society, including among those promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, and those promoting gender equality. Therefore, women in general are neglected in our patriarchal society and women with disabilities are further silenced. The need of the hour is for WwD to stand up and fight for their own rights till society takes note of them.



Valedictory

The valedictory function began by welcoming our dignitaries. The dignitaries on the dais were Hon'ble Pro VC Prof. Ruby Ojha, Former Chairperson, RCI, Prof. Sudesh Mukhopadhyay and HOD, Department of Special Education Prof. Sujata Bhan.

Rapporteurs Ms Madhuja Golatkar and Ms Yukti Gupta presented the report of Day 1 and Day 2 of the national seminar followed by the feedback by the participants. Ms Mudra, Ph.D. Scholar from Central University of Gujarat shared that she was skeptical whether to enroll or not but later, made up her mind and registered for the seminar. According to Mudra, all lectures were eye opening and provided a holistic experience as the lectures delivered by the experts were realistic and hard hitting. The panel discussion brought an experiential learning as persons with disabilities shared their own journey with the participants. They described how they established their own identity inspite of all the roadblocks. Therefore the entire seminar was a complete package. She thanked the DSE SNDTWU and NCW for organizing a wonderful seminar and said that she is

looking forward to more programmes organized by the DSE SNDTWU. The other participant expressed her gratitude to the DSE SNDTWU, NCW and the eminent speakers. Because of these deliberations over the last two days, she came to understand the vulnerable state that people with disabilities have and also what their rights and desires are. They are also a part of our society and should have equal rights to make their choice and capitalize their strengths. They are neither less in capacities nor supernatural but they are as normal as we are. She felt that they are stronger than us i.e. the normative normal. We usually fuss over small things but people with disabilities tend to celebrate their struggles and they work harder without any concession. Towards the end, she shared that she stands sensitized and acknowledges the fact that people with disabilities are human first whether male or female.

As part of her address Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Ruby Ojha said the theme of the seminar is about life and that it was not just a topic. She spoke about everyday life in which people who require help in terms of physical, mental, finances, or any other aspect of daily life. There are several factors which can cause apparent discrimination. Taking things positively and leading a normal life with acceptance of their challenges is important. She referred to the poor implementation of the policies or provisions which makes problems worse. She stated that reducing expectations people held from government etc. can still allow individuals to do well. She pointed out that women and girls with disabilities often face systemic marginalization, attitudinal and environmental barriers that lead to lower economic and social status, increased risk of violence and abuse, including sexual violence; discrimination as well as harmful gender-based discriminatory practices; and barriers to access education, health care, including sexual and reproductive health, information and services, and justice as well as civic and political participation. This hinders their participation on an equal basis with others. Further, Prof. Ojha added women and girls with disabilities remain at the margins of decision-making and work on gender equality. For too long, the specific needs of women with disabilities have been invisible, both to the advocates of women's rights and those of disability rights. Prof. Ojha concluded her sharing with the thought that one should promote primarily the social inclusion and participation of people with disabilities and their human rights. She congratulated the department of special education on holding this seminar on 'Rights of Differently Abled Women'. She said that there were a lot of takeaways and learning from the seminars which will benefit all participants.

The final words of deliberation were shared by Prof. Sudesh Mukhopadhyay. She stated that seniors like her have experienced discrimination, challenges etc. which was a part of the journey of life and that life has many challenges that cannot be avoided. She spoke about how the seminar deliberations have moved the audience and that such efforts to create awareness needs to be continued.

The concluding vote of thanks was offered by Ms Betty Abraham, Assistant Professor, DSE SNDTWU. She acknowledged the efforts and informative presentations made by all the resource persons. Gratitude was once again expressed to NCW, RCI and the SDTWU university offices for their unfailing support in making the

seminar possible. The contributions made by the students, administrative and support staff of the department in organizing, implementing the seminar was acknowledged. In conclusion, she urged the participants to continue to carry forward the fire of change ignited during the seminar.



Specific actionable recommendations

Specific recommendations

- ❖ To have more conversations on gender and disability to create awareness about this double disadvantaged group
- ❖ Accessibility to all communications/ information/ announcements/helplines should be ensured in a range of accessible formats including sign languages, braille, audio versions, easy to read versions and in local languages.
- ❖ Women with disabilities must have equal access to quality and ongoing education. The risk of falling out of the school system, especially for girls with disabilities, must be taken seriously
- ❖ All guidelines and policies developed around prevention of domestic violence must be inclusive of and accessible to women and girls with disabilities. It must also be designed to address barriers to reporting such cases.

Actionable recommendations

- ❖ Create platforms like seminars and conferences on the theme of gender and disability
- ❖ Seminars and conferences should be conducted at national and international level to address the common challenges faced by differently abled women across.
- ❖ Best practices to address their concerns can be shared with all.
- ❖ Create brochures, videos, short films, advertisements to sensitize communities about the rights of safe living, education, employment and health care for differently abled women.
- ❖ Teacher training institutes can engage students in creating awareness about rights of differently abled women through the use of media
- ❖ Teacher trainees can be placed for internship in organizations working for differently abled women.

Steps taken for implementation and suggestions for future plans

This seminar has generated a lot of interest in our students to do something substantial for WwD. Therefore, the Department of Special Education has taken a few constructive steps.

- ❖ Lectures are being organized for our student trainees in the role of Gender in developmental disabilities.
- ❖ Student trainees of the Department of Special Education have taken the initiative at local level to increase awareness about the physical hygiene of WwD during their menstrual cycle.
- ❖ The young girls with disabilities in the Department are given quality and need based education and training in vocational skills so that they can be made economically independent.

- ❖ The Department of Special Education is holding a faculty development programme on Research Methodology at the national level, where challenges pertaining to documentation of work done with persons with disabilities in general and WwDs in particular will be addressed. The post graduate students and the research scholars of the department are attending this program.
- ❖ The Department of Special Education is starting a course of 4 credits on 'Diversity and Inclusive Education' to spread awareness among the youth about the rights of PwDs and thus create an inclusive society where WwD are also embraced like women without disabilities. The course will be attended by students from other departments of the university for enhancing their knowledge about disabilities and issues around rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.
- ❖ SNDTWU has signed an MoU with The City University of New York. The Department of Special Education is planning to offer the 4 credit Course on 'Diversity and Inclusive Education' to the international students. At the international level, this is our attempt in creating awareness about rights of persons with disabilities.
- ❖ The National Commission for Women should support the Department of Special Education, SNDTWU financially to take on a research project to create awareness about WwD and their challenges in different states of India.