

CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES
PT. RAVISHANKAR SHUKLA UNIVERSITY, RAIPUR

THE CWS UPDATE



THINK PIECE

Use of Technology

Technology has entered into our lives and is snatching away the valuable time which otherwise would have been utilized in some constructive work. Facebook, WhatsApp and many more social media have created a rat race to look good and be liked by others, which is a different story from young Narcissus, who fell in love with his own image reflected in a pool of water but, never demanded likes by others. It is another version of Narcissism where apart from self-appreciation it is expected from others to put a stamp on the same. It is realized that people become unhappy and disappointed when they are not acknowledged by others, that is, the special response or admiration that one believes he/she deserve. One should come out of this phase of inflated sense of one's own importance and need for admiration, behind which lies a fragile self-esteem which is vulnerable to slightest criticism.

To optimize an individual's potential, quality time has to be devoted in constructive work rather than developing a superficial sense of perfection and behaviour that shows a need for constant admiration.

Along with this, various kinds of messages/ information are also conveyed in multi direction from one group to another leading to problems in many areas of life like work, education, financial matters and relationships. The service providers are making money out of this. It is high time to realize that "Excess of anything is dangerous". Hence, let us be the masters of technology not it's slaves.

Prof. Reeta Venugopal
Director
Centre for Women's Studies
Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University
Raipur

One Day Workshop on "Education for combating Violence against Women and Girls and Creating Lasting Peace within Home and Society"



Inauguration of workshop on "Education for Combating Violence against Women and Girls and Creating Lasting Peace within Home and Society"

Much needs to be done for the women and girl child in Chhattisgarh and global campaign on 16 days of activism on violence against women struck a chord about this pledge throughout the year. One day workshop on "Education for Combating Violence against Women and Girls and Creating lasting Peace within Home and Society" was organized on 26th November, 2015. The 16 days of activism was jointly inaugurated by Centre for Women's Studies, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University and civil society groups viz., Indraprastha Public Affairs Centre (IPAC), and Oxfam India. The chief guest of the function Mrs. Shatabdi Pandey, Chairperson, Chhattisgarh State Commission for Protection of Child Rights observed that there has been progress in Chhattisgarh but continuous efforts for equality, diligent engagement with the advocacy groups and vigilant positive approach can achieve a level of progress both as social units as well as individual example of financial and political entities.

Sharing his thoughts on the occasion Prof. S K Pandey, Vice-Chancellor of the University stated that the tag line – "Kyu Ye Farq" was a very pertinent question and exposes the prevailing disparities in the society. We need to change our mind-set towards women's rights and youth has the potential and power to bring

transformation. Prof. Reeta Venugopal, Director, CWS emphasized that the partnership with civil society and educational institute is significant to bring a lasting change because education is a significant medium to bring in social change.

Shri. Prakash Gardia from Oxfam India elucidated the nitty-gritties around the 16 days of activism and shed light on Oxfam's involvement in the entire discourse of gender justice and particularly violence against women. Shri. Narendra Kumar from IPAC said that there was a need to respect women's thinking and their issues, especially the marginalized women. The biggest challenge is to make the educational institutions safer for girls and women.

Dr. Shewli Kumar from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai added that women development and sex ratio have a debatable record, and much work is needed to bridge the wide gaps. Mrs. Melina Kurrey, AIG, CID Raipur said that the present progressive laws are of tremendous assistance but there is a need to raise awareness. She also reiterated that healthy mindsets will usher positive change.

Shri P.N. Tiwari, OSD, CID, Raipur talked about the progressive provisions, and the need to spread awareness about them. He underlined that Chhattisgarh has higher percentage of crime vis-à-vis

From the Editor's Desk

Women hold up half the sky. But the dream remains to have a community and society with zero gender bias and women empowerment is a universal concern. Empowering women means authorizing more power to the women folk and strengthening them morally, socially and economically. But isn't it a misplaced belief of women to expect others to build the world they aspire for. In fact women have to create it for themselves and inspire and empower women around them, because success is never reached alone and it is always sweeter if shared. The Centre for Women's Studies have been making concerted efforts with other stakeholders and civil society groups to conduct various activities and spread the awareness on various women issues and we are pleased to share them through this newsletter.

Dr. Preeti K. Suresh
University Institute of Pharmacy

other states in terms of percentage of population. He said that police role has broadened from mere law and order issue to sensitization and awareness generation.

During the workshop several youths came up with interesting situations that they face in their daily lives in their struggle to achieve academic and professional success. The students signed pledge cards and vouched to end violence against women. The most interesting part of the day was student taking a questionnaire to highlight the status of gender discrimination from the viewpoint of either gender. On this occasion posters on violence against women and girls were released by the guests. As part of the signature campaign the students also signed for the idea "Gender Equality: My Responsibility".



Tree plantation drive in collaboration with NSS unit of the University



Plantation drive in the University premises



Participants in the tree plantation drive



Prof. Sunita Zaidi delivering her talk on "Images of women in historical perspective"



Prof. Abha R. Pal introducing Prof. Zaidi



Cleanliness drive for Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

PARTICIPATION IN TREE PLANTATION DRIVE

The National Service Scheme Unit of Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University organized a plantation program in the University premises to commemorate the Teacher's day on September 05, 2015. Prof. S.K. Pandey (Vice-Chancellor, Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University), Dr. L.S. Gajpal (Program Officer, NSS), Prof. Reeta Venugopal (Director,

CWS) Prof. Priyamvada Shrivastava (Associate Director, CWS), faculty members and students enthusiastically participated in the event. A number of shrubs and trees were planted inside the university campus. The faculty members apprised the students about the environmental, social and economic benefits of plantation and how in the

present times the value of trees have increased to satisfy the needs created by modern lifestyles. The students committed to the nourishment and maintenance of the new saplings. The students and teachers pledged to sensitize the people in the community to create ecologically sustainable resource by planting more trees.

LECTURE ON IMAGES OF WOMEN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

A guest lecture was organized by the School of Studies in History and Centre for Women's Studies. The resource person for the day was Prof. Sunita Zaidi, former Head, Dean, Department of History & Culture, Faculty of Humanities and Languages, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She is a widely travelled scholar with Rhodes Visiting Fellowship, British Council Fellowship and Visiting Fellowship, Centre for Advanced Study in Humanities, Edinburgh.

Prof. Zaidi in her talk on "Images of women in historical perspective" highlighted the changes in the images of the women with the passage of time. She expressed concern that every year the issue of empowerment of women is merely relegated to raising slogans but the real question is how much effect is actually trickling down. Empowered women can be counted on finger tips and it is an irony that fingers are raised on them and they are removed from their

positions. This scenario is not new but have been in play since ancient times. If we sift through ancient history, it is apparent that women were granted a high status but only as a mother and wife, where they were performing household duties and serving men.

Prof. Sunita Zaidi reiterated that in the medieval times also women were relegated to a secondary status. Razia was the only woman ruler in the plethora of male rulers and even she was addressed as Razia Sultan and not Sultana. Her stint as the ruler was short as she was dethroned following character assassination. Every segment of society favored women in subdued roles only and push them to subaltern status. But it is also a historical truth that medieval rulers like Mohd. Tughlaq and Akbar took vital steps to curb the deplorable social practices like Sati and child marriage.

In the modern era English education, women education and social activism have made a

crucial contribution in improving the situation for women and their participation in Gandhian and revolutionary movements was also important. Independent India also saw several measures through constitutional rights and laws for upliftment of women. But it is ironical that still women empowerment and safety remains a dream. This dream can be realized only if women in addition to education also become aware and men also develop a progressive perspective about women. Women need to know their rights but should refrain from venturing into its misuse.

The lecture was attended by students, research scholars and faculty members of the university. The program concluded with the proposal of vote of thanks by Prof. Priyamvada Shrivastava.

On the same day a poster competition was organized for the students of the university on the theme "The power of adolescent girls vision for 2030".

CLEANLINESS DRIVE FOR SWACHH BHARAT ABHIYAN

The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, a mission launched to clean India's cities and village was observed on October 02, 2015 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and to realize his vision of "Clean India" by October 02, 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The "Swachhta"

pledge was administered to the students, faculty and the supporting staff. A cleanliness drive was organized in the University campus. The students of the campus turned out in large numbers and pledged for a neater and cleaner campus. During the past year they have enthusiastically joined the cleanliness drive and have become

active participants in cleanliness activities across the campus. They took the brooms to sweep the areas and dispose the garbage to help in maintaining a hygienic environment in the campus. It is believed that these steps will help in fulfilling the cherished dream of a clean and hygienic India.

THEATRE PERFORMANCE “HAAN, MAIN SAVITRIBAI PHULE”

The Centre for Women's Studies and Institute of Education of the University in collaboration with Azim Premji Foundation, Bengaluru, organised a theatre performance “Haan, main Savitribai Phule” on December 5, 2015 at the University Auditorium. The solo drama was scripted, directed and enacted by the renowned stage personality Sushma Deshpande. The play is in perspective of Savitribai Phule, the 19th-century woman educationist and social reformer who along with her husband Jyotirao Phule made significant contributions in the improvement of women's rights in the country as early as 1848.

The play charted the journey of Savitribai Phule who with her grit and determination transcended the restrictions imposed by her gender and caste to become a pioneer in woman's education. The husband wife duo faced stiff resistance from the society as they went on opening schools to impart education to girls and fought relentlessly against the social evils and disparities prevailing in the society like untouchability, child marriage, etc. She was truly a woman ahead of her times, in thought and deeds who had the audacity and sensitivity to lead a life defined by choices which were fervently opposed by every quarter

of the society and its institutionalized ways. Her pathbreaking endeavors and altruistic devotion for the upliftment of the oppressed and destitute, and a vision of equality, fairness and justice are truly exemplary and motivating.

The audience was mesmerized by the soul stirring performance of Sushma Deshpande who breathed life into the character of Savitribai. She has toured with this play widely across India and other countries round the globe. The majority of the 3000 performances she has made are in the villages and slums of towns and cities of India.



Solo drama on Savitribai Phule scripted, directed and enacted by Sushma Deshpande



Felicitation of Smt. Sushma Deshpande by Prof. Aditi Niyogi Poddar

PARTICIPATION IN CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND MEDIA

As a culmination of 16 days of Activism by Oxfam India, a conference was organized on 'Women and Media' in the New Circuit House at Raipur on December 09, 2015. A large number of students and faculty members from Pt. Ravishankar Shukla University, Raipur also participated in the event. The main objective of the conference was to highlight the portrayal of women in media, their participation and future in the media.

Akhila Sivasdas from Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) shared the outcomes of her studies with some illustrative examples on

responsibility of the media and its ill-effects. She reiterated that media is the biggest reference for any person, and hence, it must be sensitive, objective, issue-based and not individualistic. Senior Journalist Ramesh Nayyar expressed concern over the rise in offenses and atrocities committed against the women. He drew attention to the fact that in all these years not even a single woman has held an officiating post in the Raipur Press Club. Vikalp Shukla, News Editor, All India Radio remarked that radio is a very effective and strong medium of communication. He informed that Raipur Akashvani

has been continuously broadcasting women-specific programs that have been widely appreciated and benefitted women. Sanjay Shekhar, the Bureau Chief from India News observed that nature has made man and woman equal and thus, the society has no right to treat them otherwise. Prof. Reeta Venugopal, Director, Centre for Women's Studies said that in Chhattisgarh two glaring examples are of Soni Sori and Meena Khalkho where journalists, especially from the rural areas ensured that justice is delivered to them.



Conference on "Women and Media"



Signature campaign for the idea "Gender Equality: My responsibility"

KEY FACTS ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

Despite of the fact that today we have achieved great heights in almost all spheres of life, the women folk are still a big neglected group in terms of health. Women face the health problems right from their very childhood which gradually progresses to adolescent age and takes a big shape in the old age. Most of the health problems faced by the women at their old age are a result of exposure of risks in adolescence and adulthood, for e.g. unhealthy diets, unhygienic health practices, inadequate health awareness, health ignorance, unhealthy lifestyle, lack of access to information and health services and

economic vulnerability.

Key facts of WHO 2013 reveals:

1. Life span of women is four years longer than in males worldwide.
2. Life expectancy of women was more than 80 years in 46 countries in 2011.
3. Approximately 2,87,000 maternal deaths occur every year in developing countries.
4. Cardio-vascular disease which was earlier thought to be the main problem is the number one killer of women globally.
5. The leading cancer killer among women aged 20-59 years is breast cancer.
6. Depressive disorders and schizophrenia contribute to ill health in adolescents aged 15-19 years.

7. In 2011, approximately 4,92,000 females (60% of the total affected ones) were found to be newly infected with HIV in low and middle income countries.

8. Pregnancy and childbirth complications are important causes of death in adolescent girls in low and middle income countries.

9. More than 90% of deaths occur in women living in low and middle income countries due to cervical cancer.

10. Approximately 2,87,000 maternal deaths which is second biggest killer of women occur due to complications in pregnancy and childbirth among which 99% occur in developing countries.

11. Osteoporosis is estimated to

affect 200 million women world wide, one in three women over the age of 50 are likely to experience osteoporotic fractures.

12. Anaemia which increases the risk of haemorrhage and sepsis during childbirth is prevalent in more than one third of girls aged 15-19 years in 21 out of 41 countries.

Based on the facts it is urgently required to get oneself-screened for diseases like osteoporosis, cervix cancer, breast cancer, diabetes, coronary heart diseases, etc. because healthy women leads to healthy nation.

Source: WHO Factsheet No334 updated Sep. 2013.

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ताशों का बंगला

कुमुद कस्बेकर (ताई कस्बेकर)

ताशों का बंगला बनाकर तो देखो
ताकत न देखो नजाकत इसकी देखो
पलभर में बनता, बनता बिगड़ता
इसे ढहने को एक झोका ही लगता
अहिस्ता बनाओ, बनाओ सम्भलकर
दूर से निहारो इसे मन भर कर
पलभर का आनंद लेना और देना
यही काम हमको है करना
किसी का दुख-सुख हम क्या सवारे,
ताशों का बंगला बनाते है प्यारे

परिचय - ताई कस्बेकर 80 वर्ष की उम्र में अन्तर्भारतीय आश्रम (खामला, नागपुर, महाराष्ट्र) की संचालिका है जिसमें वे गरीब तबके के बच्चों की देखभाल व पढ़ाई के लिए स्वप्रेरित कार्य में संलग्न है।



Participants in a meeting on "Food Safety for Children" convened by Chhattisgarh Commission for Protection of Child Rights on October 24, 2015



Workshop on education for combating violence against women & girls

Women – An Essential Part for any Workforce

Medha Singh

Manager-Biotechnology,
Department of Agriculture,
Government of Chhattisgarh
(Also an Alumnus of PRSU)

"Career or family?" is a question that most women, married or otherwise, necessarily ask themselves at some point of time. This question is prompted not only by major life-situations, but also in daily situations faced by women. Every working woman constantly strives to achieve a 'work-life balance'. The phrase itself proves that these two components i.e., work and life, are at odds and need to be evened. Women who have managed to be both mothers and top professionals are superhuman. For a balance in satisfactory parenting, personal time, fulfillment at work, career progression, happy partner and elders, and good health, a woman would definitely need to be one of these, or even better, a combination.

We often hear about the "career-oriented woman", who contemplates kids or even marriage only after reaching some milestone in her career. But, how many such women actually exist? The fact remains that over 95% women in our country will get married and enter into motherhood. It is no different in the biotech sector! I reviewed this aspect recently with young working women who have just started their families. Young couples are managing the care of kids with the support of crèches and baby sitters. This is found to be a big change from ten years ago, but I was appalled at the toll this trend is taking on the women, in spite of men being more supportive these days. Among my colleagues and friends, I see young women who are true heroes, managing their work and home admirably. Many are working four roles every day of the week - that of an employee, a wife, a mother and a daughter-in-law! Point is, the demands on a woman's time guarantee a compromise in the long run, either on family, work or on personal health, particularly for ones with a challenging career. Support of life-partner and family goes a long way in assuring and insuring the career of a woman.

Since every aspect of the Indian home front involves the woman, sometimes her career stands second in comparison to family demands. The woman's career is the first choice when a sacrifice is warranted. Their role at home cannot be compromised in any way. In the face of any threat at domestic front, for many women, the career is liable to end abruptly. Therefore, to save their careers they struggle to outdo themselves every day, in all their various roles.

I have felt that whether early weds, or new moms, or teenagers' moms, or women at the peak of their career, or just over the hill, their commitment to the career depends on being able to strike a balance between personal and work life. Across ranks, working women are earning and enjoying a sense of financial independence, but most are still not in a position to make independent choices in most families. Even when they do, women always make choices that they see as right for their families. Also, women always tend to put themselves last and needless to say, their own health is the last priority. This is something women need to alter in their own interest.

Recent research has linked women's well-being and their fulfillment at work. It reports that a woman does not quit her job due to a lack of fulfillment in any one area of her life; she leaves at the point where that lack of fulfillment creates an unsustainable lack of well-being.

Today, women are an essential part of the workforce in every field. In the Life Sciences, they constitute more than 50 percent of the staff in research institutions as well as in companies. Employers across sectors are recognizing the importance of meeting their women employees' lifestyle needs. Losing committed and skilled women not only diminishes a company's talent pool, it is also a loss on the time and money spent on training and mentoring. The culture of flexible

working arrangement and option to work from home has motivated many women to keep their jobs and employers to retain talent. Aptly, they now say "I work 'for' X Company", rather than "I work 'in' X Company".

In some Industries, it is possible for the workforce, men and women alike, to work from home. Even in the Life Sciences area, there are dry lab enterprises that could operate comfortably with their women working from home, having flexible timings and working offline & online. In contrast, there is a tendency to deny these possibilities outright, where the job function is in a wet-lab setting. Although such options can work best in certain jobs, it is important to explore the possibility of creating avenues where ever feasible.

One glimpse into the daily routine of a working mother of a young child will make us realize that we are missing something. After a long day at work, she has to battle the traffic in the city or endure a long and crowded commute. Once home, she has to transform on her doorstep into a radiant, smiling, energetic mom and take on everything awaiting her there. We are making the woman fit the work place, instead of asking how we can make the work place fit her.

To conclude, providing equal opportunity to women is meaningless in the face of so much disparity in the total responsibility shouldered by a woman, compared to her male counterpart in the same rank or position. Women have to be empowered and allowances have to be made so that they can comfortably and seamlessly integrate their personal and professional lives. A change has to come in the mindsets of employers, co-workers, families and society as a whole, to ensure that women are able to make their career to work out right for themselves as much as it does for their employers and society at large.

FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES : International Women's Day, Workshop on Gender Champions, Gender Sensitization Awareness Program

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