GENDER EQUITY AND INCLUSION:
TRANSFORMATIVE PATHWAYS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

26-28 November 2019
Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) in partnership with Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (K.I.S.S.), Bhubaneswar conducted a three-day dialogue-cum-training workshop for senior management team, faculty and students at the Institute from 26-28 November 2019.

The workshop was organized as part of the **HAMSA: Campus Equity Initiative**, a first-ever unique and innovative pan-India program on developing templates for Gender Audits of university and college campuses. It brought together an engaged cohort of individuals committed to creating gender-just and inclusive campuses by engaging in raising awareness, tracking progress on campus and maximizing the reach of gender sensitization processes.

Eminent gender experts and educators from the United States of America and from across India facilitated the participatory workshop. The workshop also drew participation from Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), Hyderabad and other universities and colleges from Bhubaneswar, including KIIT University, Rama Devi Women's University and Kamala Nehru Women's College. Faculty from the HAMSA project partner institutions, Symbiosis School of Liberal Arts (Pune) and St. Teresa's College (Kochi) joined participants from the Eastern region. This report draws on the deliberations and provides the building blocks of Gender Audits of university campuses as they evolve through the pan-India initiative of WISCOMP.

Acknowledgements

Workshop participants and students of K.I.S.S. with the facilitators and the WISCOMP team.

Gender Reflexive Practice on Higher Education Campuses

Mr. R.N. Dash, Secretary, K.I.S.S. and KIIT University welcomed the participants and the facilitators to the K.I.S.S. campus and spoke about the commitment of the two institutions to creating gender sensitive campuses and redefining community outreach. K.I.S.S. provides quality higher education to students who belong to families that otherwise only

Mr. R.N. Dash, Secretary, K.I.S.S. & KIIT

figure in outreach and extension activities of universities and colleges. He hoped that the workshop would help the senior management and the faculty to further deepen its inclusion practice.

Prof. Achyuta Samanta, Founder and Mentor, KIIT and K.I.S.S.

Speaking on the relevance of the workshop, **Prof. Achyuta Samanta, Founder and Mentor**, **KIIT and K.I.S.S.** shared that while K.I.S.S. had been in existence for over one and half decades, most people were skeptical about its actual accomplishments. He noted that after the K.I.S.S. details were shared with the world though the medium of the popular TV show, Kaun Banega Crorepati, hosted by the renowned actor Amitabh Bachchan, a large number of people, including Members of Parliament and staff of the Lok Sabha Secretariat accepted that such an institution exists in India.

Prof. Samanta observed that K.I.S.S. not only attempts to redefine the idea of success but it ensures that women are at the forefront of this process. 60% of the students enrolled at the institute are girls. Girls also perform better than boys. Senior Management team has women at both K.I.S.S. and KIIT University. It has collaborations with institutions in 53 countries and a vibrant campus and most of the events and initiatives are conceptualized by women. Most of the women, when they joined, did not come with administrative experience. They have been groomed at KIIT and K.I.S.S. over the past 10-20 years. Forty Five percent of the 10,000 staff members at KIIT, K.I.S.S. and Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) are women. He shared that the organization started with a belief that a country, a state, an organization will go farthest if it gives equal status to women and men. A space where women feel safe and secure, is a space that is prosperous. The accomplishments of the institutes, over the last 22 years, are the result of equal respect for the rights of women.

Delivering the Opening Remarks, **Dr. Sasmita Samanta, Pro Vice Chancellor, KIIT University**, noted that the workshop provides a context to reflect on how each individual is implicated in the creation of unequal circumstances that surround us and the culture that exists. On a more positive note, individuals are capable of causing disruptions in society and

Dr. Sasmita Samanta, Pro Vice Chancellor, KIIT University

creating alternatives to the inequitous world they inhabit. WISCOMP was motivating K.I.S.S. and KIIT teams to initiate the process of reflection and change in Odisha through the workshop.

At K.I.S.S. and KIIT two words - equity and inclusion, are part of the institutional mission and there is an attempt at the two campuses, by the faculty and staff, to live by these two values. Every member on the campus contributes to creating a more inclusive campus so that women, the economically deprived, and the physically challenged feel part of the 'mainstream'. There is not only a policy level commitment to these values but processes have been developed to sensitize the faculty, staff, students and even visitors. The two institutes were founded with these fundamental ideas and they continue to be guided by them.

Several practices have been institutionalized and these have built the reputation of KIIT and K.I.S.S., both nationally and globally, as gender just. The WISCOMP workshop is providing a context for the faculty to share perspectives on improving the existing initiatives and developing new approaches and methodologies that can further gender equality. **Collective reflection can be a source of new and unexpected knowledge**, she remarked.

Summarizing the recent trends on women's participation in education in India, Prof. Samanta observed that the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of women is higher than that of men at the primary school

level. However, as one progresses from primary to secondary and then higher education levels, the GER of women falls behind that of men. The percentage of women in higher education (with the exception of Social Sciences and some Biological Sciences) is lower than that of men. In terms of academic performance, perhaps at all universities and colleges, women outperform men. This is borne out by the track-record of women at KIIT too. It is baffling that despite their academic excellence **women seldom reach leadership positions in** the work place. They fall behind men some where between higher education and getting to leadership positions.

Commenting on women's representation in the academy, Prof. Samanta observed that they face familial pressures and as a result are not in the reckoning for top positions. "Perhaps women do not get opportunities to explore and nurture their talent and fall behind", she said. A 2015 study stated that while **India has about 500 universities, only 19 had women Vice Chancellors.** Today with about 1000, this number may have gone up to 50 or 60, which is still very low. Why is it that despite being top ranked in universities, women are not in the top rung even in academia?

The situation is not any better in the corporate world. The Companies Act, 2013 made it mandatory that one woman should be a member of the Board of every private company and public sector undertaking. As a consequence, around 30 percent companies today have women directors on their Boards. But here again since the mandate is to have one, companies do not have more than one woman on the board. In developed countries, the situation is much better.

The workshop provides a context to learn about the reasons behind these inequalities and also **to build perspective on how this can change**. In KIIT, in the professional courses of medical sciences, management and law, women are more than 50% of the total enrolment (except in engineering where they are 30-35%). Research shows that if a woman gets higher education, she contributes more towards the betterment of society than a man. The WISCOMP workshop will give new direction and new avenues to create gender justice on KIIT and K.I.S.S. campuses. She thanked Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath for her contributions to the education of women and her commitment to creating a just and peaceful society.

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Director, WISCOMP in her address to the workshop delegates made observations on the unique position and status of

K.I.S.S. She observed that the institute provides a context for charting unique pathways for transformation in higher education on equity and inclusion as it was using **power to 'pull up' and not 'push down'** the most marginalized in the Indian context. Professor Samanta, the Founder of KIIT and K.I.S.S. decided to pull up those who did not have the opportunities and the

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Director, WISCOMP

means. She urged that the participants keep the greatness of the vision that created K.I.S.S in sight.

K.I.S.S. is truly unlike any other institution in the world. It provides quality education, boarding lodging and clothing to the poorest of the poor. It has a network of over 37,000 students and alumni and it is the first tribal university. Its position in a special consultative status with UNESCO and the ECOSOC, are remarkable achievements. The range of courses it offers— Engineering, Medical Sciences, Law and Management to Tribal Anthropology and Eco Spiritualism cannot be matched by even the largest public universities in the country. Another unique feature of K.I.S.S. is its expansiveness in the otherwise arid landscape of contemporary higher education. It is **infused with an ethic of care**.

Gopinath remarked that women redefine success in many ways. Success is not just about being on top of the corporate pyramid. It is about ethics of care, empathy and building an organization where relationships and interconnections matter. Successful organizations are ones where individuals 'bridge the power distance'; dismantle masculinist hierarchy. Higher education in India is still struggling to find a workable script of substantive equality. We know that there are several legislations but in actual classroom interaction, do inclusive practices exist, she asked.

Women's Studies and Gender Studies have theorized on intersectionality and disadvantage. They recognize that every experience in India is mediated by several factors: class, caste, religion, region and gender. And that there is no one uniform women's experience, even though there are commonalities. K.I.S.S. offers a unique model for addressing intersectionality and disadvantage. It turns disadvantage around through education. Gopinath observed that when the term empowerment is used in the K.I.S.S. brochure it seems to bridge the gap between the worlds of 'doing' and 'knowing'. She saw in the workshop an opportunity

for WISCOMP to learn from the K.I.S.S. model of equity, access and inclusion.

It was only in 2015 that the world articulated the Sustainable Development Goals but K.I.S.S. enshrined their spirit in holistic education. By celebrating the rich tribal culture which due to the colonial experiences was neglected or looked down upon, KISS has combined sustainability, livelihood safety, skill provision, community outreach and the goal of zero hunger.

Invariably, when bringing education to the disadvantaged populations, institutions slip up on quality. To invest dignity in the process is to provide the best in terms of infrastructure and faculty. It is an accomplishment of K.I.S.S. that it has redefined success and it does not focus merely on quantifiable outcomes. It is treating those as leaders who have travelled the farthest. It breaks out of the outdated idea of pre-determined outcomes and focuses on the process. This is the essence of feminist leadership.

Dr. Gopinath then explicated how sex a biological term, is conflicted with gender, a sociological construct (an ideology in some senses that impacts how power is distributed and how roles are assigned to men, women and trans people). She observed that K.I.S.S. not only recognizes the rights of sexual minorities but has formulated exemplary policies on non-discrimination. A testament to that equality practice is the hiring of trans persons as staff and faculty.

Explaining the differentiation, she noted that certain biological categories are associated with certain behaviors. She asked the participants to share the qualities that are generally associated with women and those that are associated with men. Participants noted that being considerate, empathetic and patient were generally identified with women and courage, dominance and being analytical were usually associated with men. Gopinath noted that these stereotypes continue to frame expectations even though the characteristics listed by everyone are found equally among women, men and trans persons. She also reminded that there are different forms of masculinities and men are subjected to violence. On campuses, men are especially targeted for ragging and they face violence within the home if they do not conform. All these patriarchal practices need to be interrogated.

Gender audit is a phrase that has entered into the Indian academia through the West. But it is the National Academic Accreditation Council (NAAC) that has required that all HEIs that submit themselves to NAAC

evaluation conduct a gender audit. WISCOMP calls it Reflexive practice on Gender Equity. It is not an external process. WISCOMP is developing the audits as a barometer on which HEIs could measure their own best practices. Its important to know where an institution is lacking and where it is achieving good results. Gender audit provides a context to assess and reflect. WISCOMP provides a set of parameters. It allows institutions to notch up their **practices in social justice** and look at the ways forward. It also provides a space for institutions to work together. She shared that gender inequality is not only about sexual assault and harassment but about embedded gendered practices.

University is not the usual workspace where the law of harassment applies and where an ICC is established. It's a transformative space. It's a place where people expect new ideas. It's a space where young people enter to learn about ideas of citizenship. The collective learning in university classrooms can have broader impact. In this context, she gave the example of gendered use of time. How do universities handle gendered time use to enhance the professional competencies of its staff? An audit allows it to become aware of what is impeding professional enhancement.

She shared that behind the HAMSA project are the Justice Verma Committee Report and the findings of UGC's SAKSHAM report of 2013. Both these have documented and commented on the widespread violence that women face in accessing higher education. Currently, 37.5 million people are enrolled at HEIs in India today. How these young people are prepared to address gender based violence will determine if women and sexual minorities lead a life of dignity in the future. And there is no price too high to pay for human dignity. The guiding spirit for education should continue to be 'Sa Vidya ya Vimuktaye' (trans. that alone is knowledge that leads to liberation).

Calling Out Patriarchy: When Women Write

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath involved the participants in an elicitive group exercise during the session titled, *Calling Out Patriarchy: When Women Write*. She used the posters from the *When Women Write* exhibition to discuss the ways in which women experience discrimination and violence.

Before the groups began discussing the set of posters amongst each other she provided a brief background on the exhibition. She noted the following points:

- This exhibition is the product of an earlier phase of the work of WISCOMP on addressing violence against women. It's a heuristic tool that uses the stories of women, and experiences from their lives, which together reflect a varied r**ange of circumstances in which women negotiate the terrain of institutionalized patriarchy and discrimination**, multiple identities and efforts at self-determination. In these, there are challenges, struggles, failures and triumphs.

- Each poster includes an image and an excerpt from writing by women. Writing by women is a deeply political act, which embodies not just agency and self-expression, but also resistance, a call for solidarity, recovering of narratives, histories and ensuring that women's voices are recorded.

- Patriarchal, gendered socialisation produces dissimilar and unequal women and men with vastly different parameters and notions of social conduct, morality, behavior and reality.

- The world and its systems are organized bearing in mind men's bodies, their processes, imaginations and requirements. Instead of assuming men as the only rightful claimants to the world, why can't women's requirements also be factored into our social, political, economic and cultural imaginations? If menstruation were a process that affected women and men both, would considering menstrual leave from office or the need for toilets in combat zones be such an unimaginable proposition?

- The **multifarious identities of women and their subjectivities make the idea of a homogenous category of women impossible,** and to which we could universalize experiences, struggles or resistances. Women's identities are not just mediated by gender but also by caste, class, religion, sexuality, disability, region and ethnicity, all of which work to empower or disempower women in specific contexts, not just in relation to men but also in relation to other women. For instance, upper class privilege allows some women greater power and control over a working class man in her office, but the same man assumes power over the woman in the street, where he could molest her. To the extent that women live out these diversities, not only are their stories different, but so should be the interventions that address their concerns.

- Each of the frames in this Exhibition allows for a feminist analysis of the violence women face, their histories and impetus. **Feminism – as a mode of analysis, as a movement, as a way of life, as a perspective, as a vision** – recognizes and challenges the unequal and hierarchical organization of the world.

- Delineate patterns of exclusion, inequality, injustice and violence that demonstrate the systematic, similar and pervasive nature of these experiences and their roots in meticulously maintained systems of control and domination.

- Women are socialised and indoctrinated into playing roles defined for them, however oppressive they may be for themselves and the women in their lives.

- The **struggle against patriarchy is not a women's struggle.** It involves everyone. If it requires the political empowerment and consolidation of women, it also requires the involvement of men, the recognition and acknowledgement of their institutional privilege and claiming responsibility for it.

- We are all, as women, and as feminists, part of a history that has produced us in specific ways and allowed us our freedoms, because feminists before us have made it possible for us to be where we are today. They pushed, so we could push even harder. We need to claim and acknowledge these histories and be responsible for the rights and lives we can afford to take for granted.

- We have come a long way, but as older struggles continue, others emerge to pose newer challenges. There are many complicated terrains and there are no easy answers. A diversity of situations necessitates a diversity of responses and resolutions.

After this introduction to the Exhibition, the participants were divided into six groups with 6-7 members in each

group. Each group was provided a set of posters that dealt with one of six themes:

1. Boy preference and gendered expectations with in the family

2. Exclusions and Alternative Sexuality

3. Sexual Violence, Domestic Violence and Acid Attacks

4. Sexual Harassment

5. Dalit and Tribal Identity/Intersectionality

6. Political Movement

Gopinath provided some questions to guide the discussion in the groups: Which poster resonates with you? Is there anything that you feel is alien to your social context? What? What response does the poster trigger in you as an educator?

In the discussion the following issues were foregrounded by the participants:

• Some change can be witnessed in society. Due to education and societal advancement girls are also demanding that they should be treated with dignity and equality.

• During the discussion on discrimination faced by girls within in the family in terms of distribution of food: How can programs on public health be engendered? A student shared the discrimination she faced in her home.

• Sports is dominated by men and fathers are particularly apprehensive about letting girls take up sports, professionally. There is fear of the bodies becoming muscular, injuries and skin color becoming dark. Similarly, girls are discouraged from joining armed forces due to the condition on marital status. In this context, the issue of protectionism was brought up. Why are fathers and brothers burdened with protecting women in their family? Does this expectation also place pressure on men?

• The issue of girls in progressive homes being treated like 'boys'. Empowerment is not to become more like a man. It is important to establish agency or an identity which is distinct. Empowerment means distinctiveness and agency to take control over the meaningful decisions of life and not be dictated by somebody else's notion of what is good for women or to be more like a man. A lot of people believe that if you assume and adopt male attributes, then you will be empowered/ equal but in India that is not necessarily an imperative.

• The societal expectation that a woman has to always be a few steps behind her husband: earn a little less, be less tall, be less older, etc. It is important to have financial control over one's earnings whether one earns more or less than the husband is perhaps less important.

• The invisiblization of care work and the sacrifice of women because it is seen as not contributing to GDP.

• Different forms of pressures and violence old aged women face from within their families and issues of gerontology were discussed.

• Diversity of experiences on care of parents and parents-in-law and how in families the norms of care of the elderly are changing. In many parts women continue to face the pressure of caring for their in laws and place the burden of care of parents on sons.

• The words choice, care and gender identity were problematized during the discussion, especially in view of the discrimination and violence trans persons face. They are violated from a young age and have no space to express their pain within the family, in the community or in public forums. The importance of courage to speak up and solidarity were repeatedly brought up in the discussion.

• The superstition and fear that perpetuate certain cultural beliefs that are irrational were discussed. In this context, it was recognized that dilemmas exist.

• Heteronormativity and the impositions experienced by LGBTQI.

• The double disadvantage experienced by women with disabilities was discussed. A participant acknowledged that she had not thought about women with disability having sexual desire until she had a conversation with the superintendent at a hostel for girls with visual disability. It was also noted that reservation of 3% jobs for persons with disabilities has brought the group out of invisibility and into public spaces. However, equal rights and respect are

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath facilitating the session

still not accorded to them. The issue of pity and protectionism were discussed in the context of rights of persons with physical and mental challenges.

A Supreme Court judgement where a particular municipality was fined 65 lakhs, because its negligence, rendered a young man in his early 20s a paraplegic was brought up.

- The impositions of dress codes, victim blaming, stereotyping and other issues linked to sexual assault came up. The behavior of criminal justice system towards women who have faced sexual violence, access to police station, the responsibility of teachers to help survivors of violence, provide support and make the shift from victimhood to gain a sense of agency were discussed. The failings of Indian criminal justice system and the tenacity required of the survivor to go through the process was noted.

- Survivors of domestic violence are pushed towards conciliation or discouraged by the police to lodge complaints. The entire system is structured towards a punitive process and not towards rehabilitation and restitution of survivor/complainant. In this context, how does the university deal with survivors of domestic violence among faculty and students, what kind of support is provided? Is there empathy for them? The high rates of acid attacks in Odisha was also discussed.

- Slurs for women (mother and sisters) in Odiya language. Slurs are used as a greeting and terms of endearment. Such language has become a style statement among young. Even young women see it as a sign of liberation. The need to empower men and engage with them on these issues was deliberated upon.

- Unless we believe in human dignity, any work on gender sensitization will not have the desired impact. Education can play an important role in rectifying the condition of Dalits and the exploitation they face. Merely adding new subjects in the curriculum on these issues is not a solution. These do not bring about change in mindset. There is a need for deeper engagement. A combination of interventions in family, society, schools and higher educationcan produce change. The work of Bezwada Wilson against manual scavenging was underlined.

Glimpses from the When Women Write Exhibition and posters designed by K.I.S.S. Students

- Unspoken codes and stereotypes about the color of skin have an impact on job prospects and ability to rise up the career ladder.

- The traditional practices that reinforce caste hierarchies. The purity and impurity rituals and their gendered nature were also discussed.

- Gender pay gap and undervaluing of women's labor, the differential pay at school and higher education levels, issues of contractual and permanent faculty were discussed. It was noted that by 2023, out of every five persons employed only 1 will be a woman.

- Women's political movement both to secure rights for themselves and the rights of their communities: anti nuclear power movement, environmental protection and women's role.

- The discrimination girls face within the family in terms of financial resources and the role of mother. One of the participant shared that she was the first woman in her village to pursue a PhD and gave credit for this to her mother.

To conclude the session, Gopinath mentioned that in the morning newspapers in Odisha, it had been reported that one of the members in the State Assembly stated that three children are raped every hour in Odisha and that children from poor families and from Dalit groups are more likely to face violence. Against the backdrop of these startling figures, the workshop deliberations could look at the role HEIs can play in ending gender based violence.

Feminist Encounters: A Conversation with Gandhi

Gandhi has much to offer on gender reflexivity and inclusive practices, especially on campuses. He engaged with the incipient feminist discourse in India at the turn of the 20th century. His ideas on women, women's power, the feminine, the masculine and on democracy and its relationship with power are a rich source of ideas on equality and inclusion. His writings continue to inspire debates, discussions and conversations among feminists. Some of Gandhi's followers have argued that he brought the feminine into the public space. He brought the daily artefacts of women's existence as metaphors of freedom into the public space and in some ways he transcended false dichotomies.

Initiating the session, *Feminist Encounters: A Conversation with Gandhi,* Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath shared the following lines from the work of Ambai (Dr C.S. Lakshmi, a historian and a creative writer in Tamil)

"What are the organs of the body that make one a mother? The vagina, the uterus, and breasts. Do you experience maternal love automatically if you possess these organs? Vaamu, maternal love isn't like a physical sensation. It doesn't come automatically along with a woman's body. With what organ of a man's body do you associate his affection for children? Are all emotions common to both men and women, then? Yes, we have to think that. Then it will seem perfectly natural for anyone, of either sex, to feel any emotion. Then the division between the powerful and the weak will disappear. Oppression and servility, the desire to control or to be controlled–all these will change."

Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda, Principal, Miranda House, University of Delhi made a presentation in which she foregrounded the potential, the paradox and the possibilities of looking at Gandhi as a feminist. She moved beyond the textbook like references to Gandhi and his reconstruction program and Khadi and looked at other aspects of Gandhi's ideas that connect him to feminism. There

Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda, Principal, Miranda House, University of Delhi

can be different conversations she opined: one with Gandhi's writing and our reading of his work; another through other feminists who have written on Gandhi and lastly, the conversations Gandhi had with women who can now be called feminists.

The struggle for gender equality is a continuous and dynamic one. It has trajectories that can be mapped out from pre-colonial times. Nanda tried to look at gender equality as a disruptive struggle for framing of the idea of women, the rights of women and their demand for justice. This struggle has been one of contradictions, contestations and challenges. The distinctive idea of gender equality, which was mobilized by Gandhi broke away from the social reformist understanding of the subject and remains one of the most significant political movements of India or India's national struggle.

The colonial order used the position of women in Indian society to define its regressive cultural history and to talk about practices like Sati. Gandhi's contribution was to innovate both the definition of the colonial subject, as well as to invoke the role of women, as partners. At the same time, he reconfigured the distinction between masculinity and femininity within the person.

However, some feminists are critical of Gandhi as they see many paradoxes in his ideas. They have called his position 'essentialist'. Nanda acknowledged that Gandhi does say men have a particular kind of role and women have a complementary role and he has been criticized for his views on sexuality and his moralizing tone. Some also see Gandhi as a devout Hindu with Brahmanical leanings because of his idea of Rama Rajya. Gandhi is also critiqued as a disciplinarian, the coercive leader.

Focusing on the possibilities Gandhi offers, Nanda argued that one can look at Gandhi as the nurturer and a mother figure. The ethics of care that Gandhi brought, not just in his politics or the national struggle but in his personal life is evident. He also demonstrates feminist leanings in the way he opens up space for dialogue, breaking patriarchal hierarchies. He would have conversations with everyone, whether it is Margaret Sanger or Kamla Devi Chatopadhyaya or young women coming from Punjab and Bengal. Lastly, he questioned the public-private divide, which is the so called feminist canon.

Nanda noted that there are Gandhian Feminist discourses within which there are disagreements. Several scholars like Bhikhu Parekh and Tanika Sarkar argue that Gandhi moved women from the margins to the mainstream. He brought them out into India's National Struggle. Sujatha Patel, however, disagrees. She argues that Gandhi's mobilization of women was utilitarian. He did bring women out of the family, but he did not really put them in the public domain. He saw them as coming out and then going back in.

Sanjam Ahluvalia similarly argues that Gandhi looks at essentialized gender divisions and there is biological determinism in his construction of masculine and feminine. He evokes women to pursue satyagraha as they are more naturally suited to it. Vinay Lal argues that this essentializing is not 'the true essentializing'. Gandhi does not essentialize masculine and feminine in men and women but within the individual. His idea is that of the *Ardhnarishwar*. He talked about both within the individual and that cannot be called essentializing. It indirectly brought in the idea of so

called gender fluidity, which is so popular today.

Erik Ericson goes further to say that Gandhi subjected women to violence as part of his experiments of Brahmacharya, especially in his relationship with his grandniece and his idea of asexualization. Nivedita Menon did a scathing critique of Gandhi's views on women. On the other hand Madhu Kishwar argued that Gandhi added to the idea of women's agency through programs like Khadi, Swadeshi, Satyagraha and non-violence. Gandhi categorically states that he borrowed all these ideas from women. Gandhi emphasized centrality of women in any nonviolent struggle.

Gandhi talked about the sexual division of labor but he did not see it the way we see it today. Veena Mazamdar says that he was the only one who went beyond customs and rituals. He sought a new role for women outside sexual relationships. So Gandhi by de-sexualizing or making women asexual, freed them from the role of providing sexual partnership to men. And he talked about desire in both males and females.

Vibhuti Patel makes the point that Gandhi gives political agency when he talks about equal rights for women. This was a feminizing project. Radha Kumar, Ashish Nandy and Veena Mazumdar contend that Gandhi brought women together and his strategy was effective. Nanda pointed out that Gandhi gave women agency in three ways.

Firstly, he expanded the political base and brought women to the forefront as agents of change. Until this change, women were objects of reform during the social reform movement. Gandhi not only learned from women, but he put it out in the public domain that he is learning from women. The work of Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu and several other women was mentioned by Gandhi.

Gandhi brought in issues that women dealt with in their day to day lives: Khadi, social work, salt satyagraha. Even within his body, he absorbed the essence of womanhood. He made femininity superior to masculinity not just as an attribute but also as a political method. The British imperialism became the masculine and the Indian nationalism as feminine; resilient and passively resistant. He encouraged men to imbibe the qualities of women: tolerance, resilience, self-discipline, truth, soul force. Nanda argued that Gandhi did not essentalize, he transformed and therein comes the most radical feminist slogan - the personal as the political. He connected the personal is the political to the ethics of care, which is a radical feminist position.

However, Gandhi remains a benevolent patriarch and a shrewd political strategist. Some people say he conformed to patriarchy even when he talked about asexual identities. He was caught up with notions of purity and impurity.

Nanda took a position she called reflective autonomy. Her contention was that Gandhi expanded the social base with the involvement of women.

The second reason that Nanda thought of Gandhi as a feminist was that he had empathy. He empathized with each and every person and in his empathy Gandhi crossed multiple barriers. Gandhi was a mother when nurturing animals, or on the farm or with the children. He never accepted oppression as natural. He gave tools to overcome oppression and gave strength and tools to challenge patriarchy. It is possible he did it through a conservative mode. But once women were able to get out into the public domain, then they took over.

Speaking about the relevance of Gandhi today, Nanda observed that violence against women, general violence in society, dehumanization, brutalization, declines in sex ratio and in women's work force participation are all reasons to engage with Gandhi and reclaim his ideas. Gandhi is an antidote to many of the ideas of hyper masculinized leadership that are witnessed today.

There are three conversations that Nanda used to make her point about Gandhi's relevance for present times. The first was the conversation he had with Margaret Sanger on population control and his solution for that – celibacy and which came from his own experiences. The conversation shows that Gandhi listens. This is the kind of empathy that any leader, whether a woman or a man needs to show.

Another conversation was of December 31, 1938 about the sexual harassment women faced and what should be done about it. When a woman asked that men be shamed, Gandhi went on to moralize women on the dress code. 11 girls from Bengal wrote a response to Gandhi asking him not to moralize women. Gandhi published their letter in *Harijan.* This shows how open he was to self-critique and to considering other perspectives, Nanda opined.

The last example Nanda used was Gandhi's conversation with Kamla Devi Chattopadhaya on women's involvement in the movement around the time of planning the Salt Satyagraha. To Nanda the conversation between the then 27 year old Kamla Devi and Gandhi demonstrated how open Gandhi was to dialogue and treating others as equals.

She concluded her presentation with the example of the high turnout of women at the Sabha's in Odisha during the freedom struggle when Gandhi visited the state. "There was something in him that was appealing to women everywhere. He continues to appeal to women and men for the right reasons, which is that Gandhi is in one sense, one of the foremost feminists whether we agree or not."

In the discussion that followed the presentation participants raised several contemporary issues that at one level reiterated the relevance of Gandhi and at another level critiqued his position on the rights of women. Following points were raised.

- Gandhi gave the idea that *Swaraj* will not be possible without women getting equal rights. He said that until women feel free to walk on the streets at midnight, we cannot say freedom has come. If that has not happened, then have we achieved Gandhi's vision of self-rule?

- Gandhi focused on democracy at the village level and the gram panchayat. It was only with the 73rd amendment to the constitution that this right was secured for women. However, despite the reservation for women at the gram level, at the apex level of the Parliament women still constitute a small minority.

- What was Gandhi's position on trans genders? The way he talks about gender fluidity and embraces the feminine self gives an impression that he may have been open to their equal rights. While we cannot claim Gandhi for all progressive ideas, we can see beginnings of a conversation on the rights of sexual minorities in his work.

A Research scholar from K.I.S.S. making a comment on the presentation

- Another aspect of Gandhi's progressive ideas on rights of women could be his views on widow's position in the Brahmanical tradition. Gandhi's views on the age of marriage, involvement of widows in the decision making in families and bringing widows into the public space and out of isolation/alienation.

- Gandhi is breaking away from the rescue mode of the colonial subject – the women. He reconfigured the stereotypical roles of both women and men and recognized women's agency.

- Gandhi's private life and contradictions within his family, about Kasturba's agency and his sexuality.

- Problematic stance of Gandhi on sexual assault.

- Dr. Ambedkar and his engagement with Gandhi on Chatur Varna system. Were Gandhi and Ambedkar pitted against each other or were they listening to each other?

Responding to some of the participants' questions Nanda stated that the purpose of the discussion is to ask How do we create transversal dialogic community, using the Gandhian frame of leadership? How do we engage? All that we know of Gandhi's private life is what he himself laid out for us. The way Gandhi is questioned for his personal life, none of the political leaders of today are.

Dr. Gopinath concluded the session with bell hooks' idea of 'teaching to transgress'. She observed that through her presentation Nanda was questioning received knowledge and that too using a methodology that is dialogic and evolving. She has presented a much more granular understanding of Gandhi and has suggested that no understanding is unchanging or static.

In her interpretation of Gandhi, he is constantly open to his vulnerabilities. He is conscious of his frailties. This is the approach needed on campus when we talk of reflexivity; about creative change in curriculum and pedagogy; to be constantly open to challenges that exist around us and respond to them. We need to move away from debates where one view is pitted against the other.

At the session, **Professor Shahida, Head, Department of Women's Education, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad** shared some of her experiences of teaching in the Department of Women's Studies at a university that primarily caters to educational needs of Muslim women and men in the vernacular. The students who enroll at the university come from humble backgrounds, have studied at madrasas and most are first generation learners. Many women who wish to restart education enroll at the university. Many are married at the time of enrolment or have children. Shahida shared the challenges and triumphs of teaching such a cohort of students.

Prof. Shahida, Head, Department of Women's Education, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad

As the only gender expert in the Department in 2004 at the University, she led the development of curriculum and the establishing of the Internal Complaints Committee. The Womens' Studies course was introduced in 2005. The Department made an attempt to include different aspects of Muslim women's lives into the curriculum. For its time, it was a unique and innovative program. One of the aspects of the program was a course on Women and Religion. It offered women an opportunity to engage with Quranic interpretations, most of which were translations by men. She observed that in the patriarchal interpretation of the religious texts, rights of women are twisted to suite the interests of men. In fact, there is an over emphasis on women's responsibilities and complete silence on their rights. They are asked to be 'soft and unquestioning'. Even Muftiahas (female religious preachers) depend on their husbands for interpretation. Through the course women were prodded to read the Sharia and the Hadith.

The course at the university offered students an opportunity to reclaim rights from a religious perspective. Shahida gave the example of right to Mehr (the rights of a woman at the time of marriage to set the quantum of alimony). Research that the students undertook as part of the course also provided an opportunity for them to understand the nuances of Sharia. During one such research it was revealed that 92% of women in Hyderabad did not know about the right of Mehr.

The Department also attempted to educate women about Personal Law and sensitized the Muslim community through outreach programs. There was backlash from the Muslim Personal Law Board, the maulavi's and the elders.

Today the curriculum includes many new and emerging aspects on gender equality including the following:

A Faculty participant from Hyderabad during the discussion.

- Atrocities against Homosexuals and other sexual minorities.

- Dissemination and sensitization of everyone across the board on campus - Undergraduate students, post graduate students, faculty and staff.

However, there are still challenges that Shahida faces due to her role in pushing for progressive interpretations of policies and demanding action against perpetrators of sexual harassment. The problem of trolling on social media, lack of protection from intimidation and insensitivity of the administration were particularly noted by her. She concluded with the hope that solidarity among women and gender sensitive men can be an armor to protect defenders of rights of women and sexual minorities.

- Sexual harassment guidelines that have emerged through a consultative process.

Gender, Dignity and Access

Professor Krishna Menon, Dean, School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University, Delhi

Professor Krishna Menon, Dean, School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University, Delhi delivered a lecture on *Gender, Dignity and Access*. Her lecture foregrounded how to infuse the idea of dignity for all and the spirit of critical enquiry—two core principles of feminism—into curriculum, pedagogy and everyday practice on campus. She spoke briefly about gender and dignity and linked both these ideas to access using key feminist concepts.

Prof. Menon noted that true feminist spirit lay in the willingness to learn, to change and to be open to correction. As a corollary, one of the marks of a feminist is humility and the willingness to be corrected. It is the desire to learn from anybody, anywhere, not just in the classroom and from the textbook. She shared that in a certain sense K.I.S.S. is a feminist space because it attempts to break the epistemological barriers that exist. In its practice, K.I.S.S. has moved away from the idea that knowledge exists only when the professor speaks in the classroom or it exists only in the library. She noted that the world of hope and possibilities needs nurturing as higher education without the agenda of transformation will only perpetuate existing inequalities.

The most common way in which gender is understood is the binary distinction between men and women. Because of the distinct roles they play in the process of reproduction, all other roles in society are premised on that distinction. Another important thing which is sometimes overlooked is that gender is **embodied.** It doesn't exist as a concept but it exists and is expressed through individual bodies and in that sense it is corporeal. The body therefore is a very important point of discussion and reference for gendered understanding.

Gender stereotypes begin playing out almost immediately after a baby is born. Even when two babies are the same weight, a boy will be described differently from a girl. One of the biggest breakthroughs of feminist scholars, activists doctors and lawyers is to draw attention to the fact that just because bodies are different, social rules need not be different.

An important learning at one point of time in feminist understanding and feminist politics was that **sex is natural and biological and gender is a sociological** and cultural construct. Today, we have come a long way from that understanding. One of the challenges with this understanding was that body differences were seen as unchanging and universal.

This was a time when it was easy for feminists to say, we're all women and therefore we're all sisters. **Sisterhood came from shared biology** and anatomy.

Bollywood films have perfected this idea when they use the statement "it takes a woman to understand another woman's pain." But that is not the reality, as the work of Gayatri Spivak, Chandra Talpade Mohanty and many other feminists has shown.

There is a lot of work on how **women's bodies undergo transformation**, depending upon the class, caste, race, ethnicity and location. For instance, women from lower castes who work or are involved in a certain kind of labor may have biceps that are well developed and much stronger than the arms of men belonging to upper castes. Also men's bodies are changing. The realization that **bodies are not universal and fixed** is a very important second moment in the overall trajectory of feminist knowledge.

Bodies are subject to the contexts they inhabit and the amount of nutrition they get. There are studies on the nutrition that young women in India are getting or not getting, because of which the weight of the babies that they bear, the children that they give birth to is impacted adversely. The **body is not a given**. There is discussion on whether biology is prior to society and social assumptions? Or is biology also determined and impacted by social assumptions and categories?

A good place to look for this connection is the language used in biology or medical textbooks. They bring in the assumptions that exist in a socio-cultural context. She gave the example of how fertilization is explained in biology textbooks. The bottom line to remember is that **bodies and their understandings are not pre-given or foundational truths** on which social divisions and hierarchies can be based.

The first acquaintance that most people have with gender is in the world of grammar in a language class. All languages are gendered, but gendered in different ways. **Gender in language reflects the way power is organized in society**. If one listens to the cadences and rules of different languages, one will discover and become more sensitive to this aspect of language. For instance, the use of terms such as woman writer, lady doctor. In this context, Menon suggested reading a dictionary titled *Kruttika's Feminist Alphabet*. It deconstructs gender and grammar rules. There are many changes happening in grammar and language like the use of pronouns beyond he and she. Each of these changes is important, it helps to accord personhood and not obliterate identities. Menon shared some stark examples of news reports that revealed the gendered nature of language and how cultural biases are enmeshed with it and create gendered hierarchies.

Gender is not a descriptive term but it refers to a whole range of opportunities and inequalities. Where one is in the gender scale or the gender spectrum or the gender matrix, determines what one can do, what one cannot do, what one can get in life, where one can move, what one can become, what kind of aspirations one can have, what clothes one can wear, etc.

Gender is seen to be a fashionable term to use. In government handouts and NGO meetings there is talk of bringing in a gender perspective. But absence of women and trans-people in decision making is an indicator of the kind of gender perspective that exists.

Menon shared an explanation of gender by the historian Joan Wallace Scott, 'Gender is the social organization of sexual differences, but this does not mean that gender reflects or implements fixed and natural physical differences between women and men, rather gender is the knowledge that establishes meanings for bodily differences.'

Gender is unequal division between men, women and others, embedded in social practice and institutions. It is reinforced and sustained by other kinds of inequalities in society such as caste, race, ethnicity and it is fluid. Because i**t is fluid, it can be negotiated and transformed.** And that's the most important thing from the perspective of feminist politics. It's not cast in stone.

The challenge for teachers and scholars is to visiblize gender since it is rendered almost commonsensical and natural. It is to **expose the working of gender as it exists everywhere**. We need to take our critical gaze and expose the underlying structures of gender in the most unsuspecting of locations and spaces – Biology, Mathematics, Physics, Architecture. There is feminist scholarship on these.

Menon explained the significance of Judith Butler's work to the workshop discussion. Butler and other critical social theorists render things that seem so commonsensical and uncomplicated as complex and nuanced, or in Butler's words "**granular**". In such an understanding *certitudes and finiteness* is eschewed and a tentativeness is brought into the conversation. These qualities are very important in the context of higher education because teachers and students come from different contexts. The one-size-fits-all approach to gender, pedagogy, epistemology or assessment cannot work.

Menon also introduced to the participants, the concept of *performativity*. She averred that it is not only crossdressers or trans people who perform their gender

but all men and women perform gender and continue to perform gender till the very end of their lives. Trans politics is challenging this imprisonment of bodies. But feminist politics is not just about bodies and sexuality. The **challenge to finite bodies can be transposed to challenging inevitability of certain political structures and economic ideas too**.

Intersectionality is another idea that is relevant to feminist politics. Patricia Hill Collins, the first Black Feminist talked about this idea without using the term intersectionality. Kimberly Crenshaw used this term for the first time. There is a debate amongst African Feminists and in South Asia on intersectionality and it is being critically engaged with by Queer Feminists. Jasbir Puar's pathbreaking work *Terrorist Assemblages* was mentioned as an important contribution to this debate by Menon.

Moving to the idea of dignity, Menon observed that in the Western Canon, Emmanuel Kant talks about dignity. She briefly spoke about Kantian ethics and the central questions it deals with:

(1) What is human dignity?

(2) By virtue of what do human beings have dignity?

(3) Why believe in human dignity?

(4) What are the practical implications?

Menon then elaborated on the relevance of Kant's idea that all persons regardless of rank or social class, have an intrinsic worth. She noted several aspects of human dignity: it does not have to be earned, it is an immutable human condition and therefore it can never be forfeited, it is unconditional, there can be no comparison of the dignity of different individuals. Human dignity is the basis for the human rights. It lies at the heart of discussions on the rights of the prisoners of war, rights of so called terrorists, of patients in a hospital, of a small child, of women in the gynecological ward of a government hospital, of mental health patients, among others. An important work in the Indian context on dignity, is *The Handbook of Human Dignity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* by Upendra Baxi.

One of the feminist concerns about dignity is that sometimes the idea is used to reinscribe norms of gender, class, sex and sexuality. Baxi in his work argues that we need to move away from the dyad of honour and shame, to the idea of dignity. Honor in a hierarchical society is graded. The language of honour and shame has violence attached to it and women are often at the receiving end of this violence as their bodies are markers of honor.

Dignity is important in the higher education space because one of the reasons men, women and others, hesitate to enroll in higher education is the fear of their dignity being violated – epistemologically, pedagogically and institutionally through the policies and practices. Insecurity that women face hampers their ability to access institutions of higher education. Women's insecurity is not a law and order issue, it is an issue of dignity, noted Menon.

What is a safe city or a safe University? It's a place that enables women, men and others to live a life of dignity, without fear. She gave the example of persons with disability and how inability to gain autonomy and appropriate public spaces, is a violation of dignity. Denial of access compels the physically challanged to be dependent on others.

Increasing numbers of women on campuses indicates that higher education is valued. It is also the acceptance of the idea that universities are public spaces that are open to all. And if a university is open to all, it has to foster dignity not just in physical access and safety but through classroom practices, assessments, pedagogy and curriculum. Unless a student hears her experiences reflected in the curriculum, she will not feel dignified. If a group is absent, silent, marginalized in the classroom, then their existence is in question.

Menon gave the example of how curriculum revision was undertaken in one of the courses at her university to draw attention to the fact that once change is brought about, it becomes a part of the regular assessment process. Whenever a new course is being taken to the Board of Studies, they look at whether those concerns are being addressed or not.

Menon used the work of Brian Arao and Kristi Clemens (2013) *"The Art of Effective Facilitation: Reflections From Social Justice Educators* to share what an ideal future class room could look like. University campuses have for long spoken about safe spaces. Social justice educators cannot afford to pussyfoot around difficult conversations about power, privilege, powerlessness, violence and victimhood. In a bid to create safe spaces and to not make it uncomfortable for certain groups of students, often times difficult conversations are eschewed. There is a need to make the classroom **a brave space**. In this space there will be risks: risks of feeling offended, having to face up to privilege, bring up history of violence, and victimhood and powerlessness. The space will also have to have some kind of a compact between students which could include the following terms:

- "Controversy with civility" – Varying opinions are accepted

- "Owning intentions and impacts"– Acknowledge and discuss instances where a dialogue has affected the emotional well-being of another person

- "Challenge by choice" – Students have an option to step in and out of challenging conversations

- "Respect"– Students show respect for one another's basic personhood

- "No attacks"– Students agree not to intentionally inflict harm on one another

Educators have to ensure that students are able to express themselves without fear, anger, ridicule and denial of experience. This is challenging since classrooms are increasingly diverse due to the mandates of social justice and inclusivity. They have to ensure that no student from either side "agent group" or "target group" feels excluded. However, without support of the administration, the teachers will not be able to create a brave classroom.

There are other practical dilemmas before an educator: the backlash they face, how identity is used to promote political agendas instead of democratic dialogue.

Menon acknowledged that she has had experiences as an educator that have made her question the strength of her convictions on intersectionality. She also became acutely conscious of the power she enjoyed as an upper caste, older woman who has enormous cultural capital due to her comfort with English, her education, the professional experiences she has, the clothes she wears and her demeanor. She also recognizes that individuals are rendered powerless by the structures, by the systems, by the institutional protocols and processes of which they are a part. She concluded that caste and class intersect in complex ways in neo-liberal India and there are many fault lines that one has to be sensitive to while dealing with students and contemplating how to make an institution 'inclusive'.

Discussion

- One of the participants noted that new forms of oppression have emerged due to technological advancement and there should be discussion on these in the classrooms too and not just canonical texts of feminist theory. Cyberspace is a very important area of violence that feminists are talking about. And there are many feminist groups that are focusing on **power and inequities that exist in the digital world**. It is an extension of street harassment, opined Menon. However, Cyber space gives us the option of transnational solidarities.

- When talking about dignity perhaps a discussion on capabilities is important and we can bring in the work of Martha Nussbaum into the discussion. Having rights is not enough if capabilities do not exist.

- Critical pedagogy, has a lot of potential to create the brave space – using dialogues and giving importance to experiences.

- Even having a conversation with students on beauty poses a lot of difficulties, to take the leap and discuss caste and class is a tall order at this time. Menon responded that as an educator it is important to be able to prepare oneself, both in terms of theoretical debates as well as knowing the students and their social location. Teachers also need to know when to withdraw as their job is not proselytization, it is facilitation. Like a catalyst they have to invite students to the possibility of thinking differently, to imagine the world differently.

- The question of corporeality, 'natural' and socialization remains unresolved for many intersex and trans persons? Despite undergoing transplants for the preferred gender identity, they continue to be denied dignity and equality. The meaning of natural is unclear? What is the support that trans persons get to deal with the issues they face?

  Menon noted that Queer politics has shaken the very foundation of gender certitude. At AUD, there is a Queer collective with faculty and student members who are openly queer and there is a lot of support for them.

- The challenge from colleagues who subvert new ideas that are brought into the curriculum was also noted.

Menon concluded that contestations and conflicts are part of higher education and every educator has to evolve her own strategies to deal with them.

Engendering the Campus: Reflections of a Practitioner

Prof. Kathleen Modrowski, Dean, Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat, Haryana made a presentation on approaches to gender equality beyond 'sensitization speak' that looked at leadership models in the Academy and the disciplinary hierarchies that exist. Modrowski drew from her experience of designing international programs and as a senior member of university

Prof. Kathleen Modrowski, Dean, Jindal School of Liberal Arts and Humanities, O.P. Jindal Global University, Sonipat

administration to throw light on some of the most intractable issues in making university campuses gender just.

She started with a poignant quote of William B. Harvey, formerly the Vice President and Director of the Center for Advancement of Racial and Ethnic Equity at the American Council on Education, *"How many protests will it take to finally diversify our campuses?" ...It will take all of them, and it will take none of them, because the answer does not lie in a specific programmatic initiative. Instead, the answer lies in creating an environment capable of producing and sustaining change, and doing that requires a very different set of conversations and strategies than the ones that typically dominate diversity and inclusion efforts in higher education."* Modrowski said a similar sentiment was echoed by the Pro Vice Chancellor of KIIT University at the inaugural of the WISCOMP workshop when she said that the purpose of the workshop was in one sense to disrupt society and create a new world.

There is a need for the conversation to go beyond the campuses, especially in view of the ongoing protests in various parts of the world. A lot of youth energy is going into protests but if the strategy is weak, the outcome will not be gratifying.

The objective of her presentation was to help the participants t**hink of change within their own institutions and to strategize on how to achieve it**. Strategy conversations on gender sensitization within the departments and within the university have to be frequent she opined. Elaborating further the strategy for change, she suggested that individuals begin with identifying allies and ensure inclusivity. The differently

abled, LGBTQI and ethnic, religious and regional minorities need to be included. Inclusion will provide diversity of needs, of viewpoints and of people who are going to be the change makers. The objective is to create a commitment for a **cultural shift in the institution**.

In this process of change, there is **a need to avoid assumptions**. Administration is very important and must not be left out of the change process even if a radical change is being mooted. Change makers and administration often mistrust each other. Administration thinks that they know what is best due to experience and/or as a consequence of being in authority. Sometimes there exists at institutions a benevolent patriarchal type structure in which people at the top are expected to know what's good for everyone. The leaders also feel compelled to fulfil this expectation. These barriers need breaking. **Honest dialogue and negotiation is invaluable** for making any kind of change.

Faculty and instructors of every level and curriculum designers are another vital constituency, because the message of creating a gender equitable society, must run through the entire campus. Offering a single course, even if mandatory, for everyone will not bring about the desired change. There is a need for sustained conversations and in multiple forms; the **curriculum has to be infused with ideas of equity**.

An important part is long term mapping of the campus space. The objective is to see which are the gender friendly, and the gender restrictive, the safe and the unsafe spaces on campus. Individuals have to learn to examine **patterns of thought and behaviour in their own lives**.

There is a need to eschew the assumption that students are willing to relinquish privilege or that students can easily adapt to change. All youth are neither progressive in their beliefs nor are they open to dialogue. Therefore, when a learning program is created, it is important to list out its assumptions and this is a difficult part of the process.

Modrowski further observed that our mental reactions and imagination are gendered. However, the process of creating change is exciting as our own imagination can change during the process.

All efforts have some flaws, but many efforts and many programmes can result in 'some' change. Therefore,

we cannot end at one program, one event, one survey or one audit, gender equality requires sustained engagement. There has to be a willingness to analyze what was done and to identify what was good and what was not so good and how it can be changed the next time around. She shared a statistic from the US and from Europe which showed that 2/3rd of all organizational efforts towards change, including training programs do not lead to systemic change.

Having a few inspired people who can carry out the vision of the change, and ignite interest of other people will carry forward this work. It is very important to have people who are willing to '*carry on no matter what.*'

Modrowski stated that gender sensitization should involve teaching staff at all levels, invited speakers, facilitators, students, prospective students and alumni, communication and human resources staff and employees and last but not the least, affiliated parties and subcontractors, such as advertising and translation agencies.

Sensitization programs should be suited to the languages each constituency of stakeholder speaks, using the idioms or the examples that they can understand, without talking down to people. There is no dearth of resource persons who can do this effectively. It must be ensured that the entire campus community not just receives the message but goes through the potentially transformative experience that runs non-stop.

Modrowski shared some examples of communication materials (images and brochures) to discuss the kind of messages that are sent out from the university. She said a discussion on who the material is intended for and what is the message should take place beforehand.

She shared a set of guidelines from European Union on promoting diversity that includes the following:

- general guidelines on gender-sensitive language and visual communication
- specific guidelines on the communication of job vacancies which could also (explicitly) encourage the under represented sex;
- training courses in gender-sensitive communication for key actors;
- awareness-raising in gender-sensitive communication for members and employees of the academic institution;
- screening of existing communication material to improve it according to the guidelines put in place;

- a department email address or web service where all academic members and employees can ask for advice when in doubt concerning matters of communication, and where they can (anonymously) document incidents of gender-biased communication and/or make concrete proposals for improvements;
- a balanced communication team on the central and/or faculty boards level, so as not to miss out on talents, stances and viewpoints;
- an implementation plan for the measures taken;
- proper monitoring and evaluation of the measures taken.

> *The WISCOMP program is dynamic and one of the reasons it is so stimulating is participants make important contributions and inform subsequent dialogues.*
>
> – Kathleen Modrowski

Discussion

In the discussion that followed Modrowski's presentation the question of equal access for different groups of people especially trans persons was noted. A participant noted that access for sexual minorities in Odisha is almost zero as only men and women are eligible. Although according to the 2015 Supreme Court judgment, all the governments need to change their policies, even basic facilities like access to public toilets does not exist. No gender neutral toilets exist in universities or other public places. Trans persons are not represented in any senior positions. NGOs are the only place trans persons are in decision making positions.

Gopinath said that the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai has gender-neutral toilets and they are advocating for other campuses to also provide these facilities. However, this problem is not specific to trans persons only, at many institutions persons with physical challenges and women face similar problems.

In view of the discussion on gender sensitivity of communication at universities, a participant shared that while they do focus on the messaging, moving beyond numeric representation of girls is a new idea she has learnt. Another participant shared that like in other universities across the country, in Odisha too access to senior management and the board is limited to privileged group of men and the power structure is rigid.

At Indian universities, communication and gender sensitization are often only linked to community

outreach. But when one looks at news stories about sexual assault and rape on television and in newspapers and magazine, it is striking how insensitively they are covered. It demonstrates that the reporters and the editors attended institutions where gender sensitization work was of very poor quality. The role of university is therefore very important.

The need is for faculty, administration and students to work in tandem but many a times the viewpoints are divergent and that poses a challenge. For instance, curricular changes do not pass through Academic Councils if they are thought to be "too progressive".

To conclude, Modrowski suggested learning through interactive programs on gender issues. Some of the theater techniques developed by Augusto Boal, especially Forum Theater, can be particularly useful. An essential requirement for this methodology to be effective is the courage to speak to real issues, irrespective of the discomfort they may cause.

Economy, Culture and Women's Agency

Prof. Bidyut Mohanty, Head, Department of Women's Studies, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi in her presentation made a case for iconoclastic spiritual recovery of cultural symbols. She argued that gender discrimination in higher education can be addressed if we have a better understanding of the culture within which educational institutions operate.

Prof. Bidyut Mohanty, Head, Department of Women's Studies, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi

Culture is a double edged weapon. It can be employed to justify oppression but can also be used to challenge injustice. Both in the *Manu Smiriti* and in Tulsi Das's *Ramayana*, women are described as 'objects worthy of a beating'. Against the backdrop of such regressive cultural beliefs, she asked how can spaces for agency be opened?

Using an interactive mode of inquiry, she asked one of the participants who practiced the Manabasa Gurubar[1] to narrate the story of the *Lakshmi Purana*.

Three deities are worshiped in the Jagannath temple: Lord Jagannath, his elder brother Balbhadra and his sister Subhadra. There is a separate temple where Lord Jagannath's consort Goddess Lakshmi is worshiped. Following is the story in the *Lakshmi Puran*: Once Goddess Lakshmi visited Shriya Chandaluni (a low caste scavenger woman). Balbhadra got angry with Lakshmi and asked Lord Jagannath to abandon her. In this conversation, Balbhadra is said to have referred to Laxmi as footwear. Jagannath turns Lakshmi out of the house. Lakshmi leaves the home but she decides to not go to her parents' home and instead lives independently. She avenges the insult by cursing her husband and brother-in-law to go through a prolonged ordeal of 12 years without food, water or shelter.

In the Purana, it is stated that Lakshmi believes that if she does not punish her husband and his brother, men of Kalyug will not respect women. When Lord Jagannath asks her to return home, she puts certain conditions for her return, one of which is that in the Lord's home/temple there will be no caste discrimination.

Mohanty averred that this story was written in the 16th century during the Bhakti movement. Balram Das wrote the story and chose a female protagonist. In keeping with the Bhakti tradition, there is no intermediary between the devotee and the God. It also allows the Bhakt (devotee) to rebuke the Gods and to embrace him.

Balram Das saw that women were illiterate, they worked in the fields and their work in the home was not recognized. In writing the Purana, he promoted the idea of dignity of labor and household work. He also challenged the caste system. Mohanty contended that women have to nuance their understanding of culture to regain agency.

Dr. Gopinath urged the participants to consider re-reading the Text. She also noted that the story in a sense asks us to value the work of agricultural labor, the contribution of women as producers of wealth and food, which is generally marginalized today. A participant noted that the folklore also glorifies women's role as cooks for the family and creates the belief that only a woman can do it well, thereby also confining women

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[1] Manabasa ceremony is celebrated by Odia Hindus. In this festival, Goddess Mahalaxmi is the presiding deity. It is believed that the Goddess herself comes to every household and removes pain and sorrow. The ritual is performed every Thursday in the month of Margasira.

to a particular role in the family. The onus of everyday practice of the rituals that are performed for the prosperity of the household is placed on women.

A participant observed that it is very difficult to take rituals out of context and this story has religious connotation and not just social or cultural significance. Families perform many of the rituals together and sometimes within families there is freedom to choose the parts that are followed and those that are ignored. The debate between traditional rituals and change will continue. But there are ways in which religious rituals are being revisited, constantly appropriated, recreated and rewritten.

Mrinalini Padhi, Senior Lawyer, Odisha High Court commented on the presentation on cultural practices and also spoke of the engagement of law with cultural practices and women's rights. At the outset, she noted that there are aspects of the rituals attached to the Jagannath temple that are 'non-feminist'. For instance, on the fifth day of the ritual when Lord goes to his parents' house with his sister and brother, he leaves his consort Lakshmi behind. Lakshmi expresses her anger and anguish by breaking the Chariot. When The Lord returns on the 9th day, all he has to do to please Lakshmi is to offer her sweets. Padhi opined that many such cultural beliefs need revisiting.

Mrinalini Padhi
Senior Lawyer
Odisha High Court

Using humor, Padhi conveyed the contradictions in the Indian cultural landscape and the hypocrisy on women's dignity. Today, heinous violence against women like acid attacks go unpunished, while the tradition of castigating Ravan for sins committed centuries ago, continues. The five iconic heroines of Hindu epics are extolled in a hymn and it is believed that reciting of their names dispels sins.[2] However, these women had multiple partners. She also questioned the unequal burden placed on women for carrying cultural traditions and of balancing career and household responsibilities.

Speaking to women's rights guaranteed through legislation, she observed that most of the laws that have been enacted in India are in reaction to situations. Few if any laws have prevention at their core. Efforts to engage with gender issues before they become a problem are seldom undertaken in India. For example, Sati was abolished by a law in 1829. However, after the agitation

in Deorala (Rajasthan) in 1985, the community became very aggressive about defending this regressive practice. Only two states in the country had regulations on the Sati Abolition Act and there were no regulations at the central level. After 158 years, the Parliament had to enact another law to deal with the backlash from the community that practices Sati. What use is law, if social change has not happened? The dichotomy between what the community and family want and what law states is evident.

Another example, was from a community called Vedehi in Madhya Pradesh. In this community the puberty of girls is celebrated by prostituting them (usually to track drivers). The mother and brothers connive in this practice. The girls' earnings are used for the education of her brother/s and for running the household. Such exploitation has been normalized and is considered natural.

Padhi also drew attention to the gaps that exist in legislations. The Domestic Violence Act 2005 carried a definition of perpetrator which stated that only an adult male could be accused of the crime. The Supreme Court clarified in 2016 that the perpetrator could be a woman provided she and the survivor were living in the same house. Women across the country endured violence from women in their families and did not have any protection between 2005-2016. These examples demonstrate that unless law is sensitively conceptualized and effectively implemented, it is merely a piece of paper.

Padhi observed that because the number of women in the educational space has grown, patriarchy feels threatened. This is the reason women in HEIs are facing violence. There is a spectrum of harassment and violence in HEIs. Two instances of campus violence in Odisha are of relevance to the discussion – 1974 incident of violence and 2018 violence between the boys of two colleges in Bhubaneswar city. In both these cases, the trigger point was gender issue - sexual harassment of a girl, but once the conflict flared up, the protest was no longer about gender based violence. It was a conflict about male honor and institutional prestige.

Ending with a message of hope and positivity, Padhi placed faith in progressive media campaigns and support offered to survivors of GBV. She mentioned that survivors of domestic violence in Odisha have – SAKHI – one-stop centers, protection officers at district level and para legal volunteers who are doing a commendable job.

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[2] *She recited the shloka: Ahaliya Draupadi Tara Kunti Mandodari tatha panchkanya smaratnityam mahapataknasham.*

Exploring Time Use

Dr. Vandana Vasudevan, Writer and Independent Researcher made a presentation on *Gender and Time Use*. She began by providing a rationale for why it is important to look at time through a gender lens and analyze how gendered division of labor within the home impacts women. She shared the findings from her research that focuses on the lives of working mothers in urban areas of developing and developed countries.

Dr. Vandana Vasudevan, Writer and Independent Researcher

The most obvious aspect of gender inequality in the workplace is the huge pay gap in both the developing world and the developed countries. Even in countries like France, it is about 25%. In many European Union states, recently, women struck work demanding that the pay gap between men and women be addressed. Another aspect of inequality in the workplace is that women are forced into jobs that don't match their skillset. They are compelled to work closer to home and to take up parttime jobs instead of fulltime work. It forces upon them occupational segregation. In the universities, typically women are found in teaching and lower rungs of administration.

Vasudevan shared that she had conducted research on the mobility characteristics of urban working women. She explored the capability of mobility of urban working women; what factors influence this capability? Do women who have the capability for mobility also have the capability for spatial access? How does the capability for mobility and spatial access affect other capabilities? What are the constraints to women's overall well-being?

Historically, the notion of "citizenship" and "right to the city" have excluded women. Feminist theorists have criticized urban planning as being blind to unequal gender relations. Women's exclusion from public space is reflected in urban design, services and infrastructure. This exclusion is further compounded by the situation within the home. Due to the burden of household work and work outside the home, **women suffer from time poverty**. This has negative consequences for women's leisure, health and their relationships.

The key differences between women and men's mobility patterns are that women make short frequent trips, they walk more than men, they are more dependent than men on public transport and when compared to men they are more often accompanied by children. Behind these differences in mobility are the social and cultural restrictions on women, fear of sexual harassment, violence and unequal division of labor and time poverty.

In her research (conducted with working mothers), Vasudevan found that working mothers spent 60 percent of their time outside the house and 40 percent within the house. And of the time they spend outside the house, seven to 9 percent is spent on the journey to work. It is remarkable that this is true of a developed country, like France and of small towns in India. Development has not dramatically changed the equation between women and men.

It is not sufficient to just note these differences in time use but to assess the sense of well-being and the capabilities (to use Amartya Sen's term). What are women's suppressed desires? What are the constraints they face due to which they are unable to pursue their desires?

Time is the biggest factor and it has a stronger influence than even finances or physical energy on women's sense of well-being. This was also true across cities. Vasudevan shared some examples of how time constraint plays out for women in different cities. A woman in Trichy (India) said, "I come to office and have my coffee here because I don't eat at home." Vasudevan noted that this woman gets up at five o'clock, goes to the Church, comes back, cooks and feeds her children, and then leaves for work. She shared that because she does not find time to eat she has developed acidity. In their daily routine women spent a lot of time cooking and feeding the family but don't have time for themselves. Women also experience lack of sleep and rest.

Further, time poverty impacts women's relationships. Women in France face difficulties in finding baby sitters and paying for them. This restricts their ability to spend time with friends or go out. In India, she found that the division of labour is so entrenched that women do not see any problem in the spouse not helping with the household chores.

There is a need for the policymakers to recognize the tyranny of time on women's lives. But to recognize it is important to measure. Unfortunately, Indian government does not collect data on time usage or conduct time audits.

Time usage patterns can build understanding on the impact of improving walking infrastructure and public transport on different populations in the city. Since these are used by a majority of women, they save time. Investments in such infrastructure reduces the physical stress on women. Another aspect is institutionalized childcare. There is complete dependence on the family in India for child care. The adverse impact of the absence of institutionalized childcare is on lower income migrant women who lack the support of a family.

Health and fitness facilities are also not prioritized in India. India is the diabetes capital of the world and Indian women are genetically predisposed to heart ailment. Yet, there is little thought or policy debate on these issues. In the West, state is trying to make it easier for individuals to take breaks and exercise at easily accessible facilities. These are issues that must enter into the HEIs as future workforce is being prepared in this space.

During the discussion, several issues were flagged including the issue of toilets facilities for women in public areas, the difficulties new mothers face because there are no spaces for breast-feeding.

The issue of assigning a monetary value to the work that women do within the home and adding that to the GDP was deliberated upon in detail. Some of the other issues that were raised were:

• The issue of children who have both parents working.

• Providing crèches at universities.

• Legal provisions for women who take time away from their career to have children.

• The emerging areas of research in Gender and Geography.

• Extremely low levels of participation of women in the transportation sector across the world.

Vasudevan observed that a British researcher of urban spatial and social policy, Clara Greed opines that one can judge a society by the number of toilets it has for women. The silver lining in India is that things seem to be improving. There is growing attention being paid to toilet facilities for women in both urban and rural areas.

On the issue of accounting for and valuing women's household work in the GDP, the first step is to measure time use. In India, there is only sporadic data on time use, nothing systematic or on a large scale. Even the

work that women do in terms of collecting wood or working on their farms is not added up in monetary terms. This has been a demand of feminist economists for a long time.

The issue of unlicensed crèches with uncertified care providers is common in urban centers across India. In rural areas, there are poor quality care facilities for children under various schemes but India still has a long way to go before it can say that progress has been made towards provision of quality child care for working class parents. This has serious implications for children of migrant labor.

In France, access to age appropriate Crèche facility is a universal right. Such facilities are provided in every neighborhood by the state. In US and some other countries, it has become a norm to provide such facilities in the work place. Companies and universities provide childcare facilities to make them women friendly. In India, state only provides crèche facilities for children from socio-economically marginalized groups and not others and women from other social classes are left to fend for themselves.

Following Vasudevan's presentation, Seema Kakran, Deputy Director, WISCOMP shared with the participants the notions of productive and reproductive work. This heuristic tool has been employed by feminists to uncover how sexual division of work impacts the lives of women. This categorization has

Seema Kakran, Deputy Director, WISCOMP

many grey areas but is still useful to understand sexual division of work at home as well as how the same division gets replicated in the market and in other institutions. It helps understand the interconnections between gender, market and the family.

Productive work is paid work and counted in the GDP of a country. Reproductive work is unpaid work that helps reproduce family and the community. Unpaid care work within the family is mostly performed by women. A lot of work that is unpaid but that keeps institutions running is also reproductive work. For example, voluntary work of students/faculty on campus. Voluntary work that is performed through religious institutions is also reproductive work.

Since Gender Audit seeks to bring about 'change', it is important to identify what is to be changed. The heuristic of productive and reproductive work assists

in identifying where workspaces replicate the sexual division of work and how change can stop its perpetuation. The participants also shared their insights on filling out their own 24 hour time use sheets that had been handed out to them on the first day of the workshop. The following issues were identified as relevant to their institutional context:

- Who among the faculty has more time for investing in professional development – research/grant applications/publication?
- Who is investing more time in voluntary work?

- Who is given more responsibilities for co-curricular work and work beyond the classroom hours?
- Which students have time to be active in student organizations, give time for community outreach work?
- Family expectations on re-working class schedules for family emergencies
- Issue of uninterrupted time for work and quality of work hours and not just quantity of hours spent on campus.

Safety Audit

Seema Kakran, Deputy Director, WISCOMP and Diksha Poddar, Consultant, WISCOMP facilitated an interactive session that involved the participants in a Safety Audit of their institute. The facilitators introduced two tools for conducting the audit, one developed by Safetipin (an organization that provides data on safe mobility) and another by Jagori (a New Delhi based feminist organization).

Safetipin has developed a mobile app that can be used to carry out a safety audit in any public space. Each group selected an area (either inside or outside the campus) that all members in the group were familiar with and assessed perception of safety based on a set of physical and social characteristics. Before proceeding with discussion in their groups, the facilitators provided a brief overview of why safety audits of public space are considered important. The links of Safety Audit to the earlier session on urban design and time use were elaborated upon.

The groups discussed perception of safety based on a set of questions. (See Overleaf)

After the deliberations the participants observed that while the K.I.S.S. and KIIT campuses are in general safe for women and men, the areas surrounding the campuses have many issues. The following issues were raised about safety near the campus and during movement from one part of the campus to another part:

- Issue of lighting in the evening and at night
- The existence of a resettlement area near the campus that is unsafe due to criminal activities including sexual harassment and snatchings
- Lack of functioning public toilets
- Lack of sense of safety despite police presence in the vicinity of the campus
- Research scholars and younger faculty who stay on campus for late evening classes noted that they feel unsafe and have difficulty in accessing **public transport** (both cabs and buses)
- Lack of display of emergency numbers
- Park close to campus with lot of men was pointed out as a cause for feeling unsafe
- Normalization of criminal activities like drinking in public areas
- Presence of street animals, particularly dogs increases sense of fear. It becomes a gender issue as women feel more vulnerable then men.
- Lack of boundary wall makes women feel unsafe
- Accessibility issues for wheelchairs

Participants also noted some of the factors that made them feel safer in public places:

Diksha Poddar, Consultant, WISCOMP explaining the parameters of a Safety Audit to the participants

Parameters of a Safety Audit

Physical Infrastructure

- ❖ Lighting – are the lights working? Do they light pedestrian ways? Are there dark areas?
- ❖ Sightliness (how far ahead can you see and be seen from)? Are there foliage/bushes/trees which hinder the view ahead?
- ❖ Are there boundary walls? If so, are they high? Can you see into the buildings?
- ❖ Are there entrapment areas – recessed doorways, alleys?
- ❖ Are there any demolished or unfinished buildings?
- ❖ Is there good signage (maps, directions, etc.)
- ❖ Are there sidewalks? If so, are they wide enough? Are there obstructions or large cracks?
- ❖ Are sidewalks accessible for people with disabilities or with prams (dropped curbs, paved)?
- ❖ Are the public spaces surrounding you clean and well maintained?
- ❖ Are there any public toilets and dustbins? If yes, who far are they from where you are? What is their condition?
- ❖ Are there open spaces or parks? Do women and children use them? Till what time is it safe to use?

Social Usage

- ❖ Do the buildings in the area provide informal surveillance (shops or restaurants with large windows, housing or offices with balconies)?
- ❖ Are there street vendors?
- ❖ Are there people on the street, men/women/trans persons/children?
- ❖ Are there groups who use the street that make women feel unsafe?
- ❖ Is there any visible drug or alcohol dealing/usage?

- ❖ How many women are there? Are they rushing through or lingering?
- ❖ Are there places to spend time/hangout (benches, shade, interesting things to see such as public art)?
- ❖ Are there public community spaces?
- ❖ Are there safe pedestrian crossings?
- ❖ Are there children or youth playing? What age group?
- ❖ Are there public transport hubs close by – metro station, bus stop etc.?

Security and Policing

- ❖ Is there any visible policing? Police station, police booth, police patrolling.
- ❖ Are there any private security guards?
- ❖ Are there any other emergency services available?
- ❖ Are there CCTV cameras?

Public Transport

- ❖ Does the bus stop/metro station have enough lighting?
- ❖ Are there shops and vendors around?
- ❖ Are there people around? Are there women and children?
- ❖ Is there good signage?
- ❖ Are there emergency numbers and helpline numbers on display?
- ❖ Are there any police or police booth in the vicinity?
- ❖ Is there separate space for women inside the transport?
- ❖ Do the driver and conductor respond of women report any problem? If so, what is their response?

- Presence of security guards
- Women auto drivers in the city
- Transwoman cab drivers and women cab drivers.

It was also noted that CCTV cameras have added to everyone's sense of safety on campus as it has led to better monitoring of entry and exit of persons. However, CCTVs are only helpful after an incident of violence occurs, they do not prevent violence.

Some of the participants noted that availability of safe drinking water should also be included in a safety audit.

Kakran and Poddar concluded the session by sharing some of the findings from Safety Audits conducted in bigger cities that have revealed who the most vulnerable groups are and how policy change has been brought about through Safety Audits. They asked the participants to collect data using safety audit tool to advocate for services within the institution and in their cities.

Gender Audits of Campuses

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath introduced the concept of Gender Audit and facilitated interactive sessions where the participants were divided into smaller break out groups to create plans of action for gender audit of their institutes.

Gender Audits seeks to involve faculty, senior administration and students in action. It is designed to help those in the academia get out of the comfort of their armchairs and examine how gender equity, access and sensitization play out in the everyday life of a higher education institution. There are six broad heads under which this reflection can be undertaken. She listed the six components of the audit and the kinds of questions that could be used in the reflexive process and gave some examples for explication.

- **Organizational Structure and Culture**: What does the organogram of the institution look like? What is the administrative hierarchy? What are some of the belief systems? What is the mission statement? What is the vision? Where does the institution want to go? How are the meetings held? Who takes minutes? What time are meetings held? Who sets the agenda? How is action tracked? How is the time table decided? Who gets what space on campus? Who gets central space and who is stuck in one corner in the basement?

- **Administrative Practice**: How are faculty and staff hired? Who gets what in terms of salaries and perks? What kind of rules of the game exist? Who stays longer hours? Who gets some reprieve? Who takes on additional responsibilities? Whose work is regarded or not adequately regarded?

- **Curriculum**: What are we teaching? How do we teach? What is in the formal curriculum? What it is in the informal or hidden curriculum - where certain ideas are transmitted without being obvious. For example, at K.I.S.S. inclusion is not really part of the formal curriculum but it is weaved into the warp and weft of the institution. At some institutions, while it is not stated in the formal curriculum, teaching of Hinduism is part of the everyday. What do the invited speaker programs look like? Is there tokenistic presence of women speakers? Is the last session at seminars on gender?

- **Media and Communication**: How does the institution communicate the essence of what it stands for to the outside world? How do the faculty/ students/administration communicate amongst themselves? What are the values with which the institution identifies itself as a unique place? What are the things that the university encourages? Does the institution encourage dialogue or discussion? For example, one institution might encourage placements another may focus on international collaborations. What images are used in the communication? How are they used? What does the website say about the university/college? Who are the people whose photographs appear on the website? How are they chosen? Why are some programs taken for granted? Why do some other programs get more space?

- **Student Life and Services**: Professional development – What kind of activities are encouraged? Who is allowed to have a voice? What are the amenities students have? How are students recruited? Which section of students have been encouraged to apply? What is the methodology that is used to reach out to them? How do students make their career choices with the courses? Is mentorship offered and counselling services, both personal and professional? When the students have access, where do they go when they are feeling isolated, and they are feeling that they are underperforming?

- **Campus Infrastructure**: How do you design the public space? Who has access to infrastructure? Do differently abled people have access to braille boards, speech software, wheelchair friendly buildings, Gender neutral toilets? Is there proper lighting so that students feel safe on campus? If there is a sprawling campus and there are areas that are unsafe, how are those spaces monitored? Is there a safety audit? Are you able to go around and do something about the safety? How do you do a safety audit? How do students get involved in doing an audit?

This framework with six components has been developed for campuses to be able to evaluate their activities and the culture of the institution. This is a methodology of change and while a report may come out as an end product, the process of conducting the audit is more important than the end product. It is hoped that the process will change the conversation amongst the faculty, amongst the students, between the students and the faculty and between the faculty and the senior management.

Equality and inclusion are long term objectives. The process of **Gender Audit is both a means and an end** as it creates space for learning as the institution moves towards greater equality and inclusion.

The workshop is a space for a discussion on what a gender audit process does? How it impacts the faculty's attitude, the ethos of the institution, participatory processes in the institute and its inclusion practice. How it can make the institution more democratic; in consonance with the fundamental rights enshrined in Article 14 and 15 of the Indian Constitution that speak to gender equality and equality of opportunity. How do we become more gender sensitive? It seeks to provide the space for **identifying what are the needs of the institution** and what are the available tools for change?

Gopinath briefly shared the findings from the gender audits conducted at the University of Columbia, New York and how they helped bring about change. She invited a faculty from one of WISCOMP's partner institution - St. Teresa's College, Kochi to share some of the initiatives the College has taken on the campus after WISCOMP's engagement with them on gender audits.

Dr. Latha Nair, Associate Professor, Department of English and GUNN Centre for Research, St. Teresa's College, Kochi shared a brief history of the institution and the socio-cultural milieu within which it functions. Nair averred that most girls when they are growing up are taught to be meek, subordinate and to endure injustice without questioning. St. Teresa's College, an all-women missionary institution, was established in 1925 with a view to bring women out of this submissive and subordinate status. The college is almost entirely run by women and the employees are over 200 women, two men and a small group of nuns. It has a student body of 3800+ young women. Overtime, the faculty have come to play a central role at the institution.

Dr. Latha Nair, Associate Professor, Department of English and GUNN Centre for Research, St. Teresa's College, Kochi

The WISCOMP workshop in January 2019, helped the campus community "re-see" itself and the institution through the gender lens using the gender audit tool.

The first insight that was gained was that being a woman does not automatically sensitize an individual to gender issues and that all-women institutions are not naturally gender sensitive. Women can be gendered and discriminatory in their outlook towards men, women and trans persons.

As part of its gender audit, St. Teresa's examined three aspects of its institutional practice: the curriculum, informal practices among the faculty and the infrastructure, particularly toilet facilities.

The college audit team, that comprises of faculty and students used online survey tools to collect data. The staff and students are savvy users of mobiles and other digital devices and this was optimally used to carry out the research.

The curriculum had never been evaluated for gender sensitivity at the College. To assess gender sensitivity of the curriculum, the college team carried out a survey asking all departments to share their perceptions. The Audit team was surprised to find that even the Literature Department had not carried out an assessment of the texts used. They had not thought of whether the work of women writers was included? Did they have Queer perspective in the prescribed readings? 30% of the respondents felt that gender sensitivity was lacking in the curriculum. However, a positive finding was that the students felt the College prepared them well for leadership. They felt empowered and self reliant.

The second area of priority was informal organizational practice. The audit assessed how gender sensitive is the senior management to the multiple responsibilities of the faculty when it calls them for meetings? A large majority of faculty (35%) at the college falls in the 35-45 age group and this group has a lot of familial responsibilities. The management was not aware that more than 55% of the faculty had more than 2 dependents. 64% felt that meetings extended their regular workday hours. The audit also sensitized the management to the long commute the staff took to reach the college. The administration was completely oblivious that 49% of the faculty spent 2 hours in care time and many of them took work home.

Some of the findings from the audit on infrastructure were shocking. It was found that students felt inhabited to ask for toilet breaks. Many refrained from using the toilets for fear of missing classes (29%). The infrastructure was grossly inadequate given the number of users. Based on the recommendations of the audit team, the college is constructing more toilet facilities and has decided to change the interval time.

Another change that unexpectedly came about after reflection on inclusion practice was in the student orientation program. St. Teresa's is a Catholic institution and it has a student orientation program that is infused with religious themes. As a consequence of the gender audit on campus, this religious component has been made optional instead of mandatory. The management was convinced about this change using data and rigorous research.

The College also gathered collective will to collaborate with *Women in Collective Cinema*[3] to host a seminar and later screen a series of films made by women as part of a film festival. This was at a time when no institution or organization was willing to host any event by the Collective since it was raising voice against sexual harassment by powerful public figures.

The College is also reclaiming the space that surrounds the campus and has organized a night. As a result of the audit, students feel they can voice their concerns without fear within the institution and outside.

The campus has also opened its gates to the transgender and gay community and that is revolutionary for a Catholic Christian institution. One course is being offered that is open for enrolment for students of all genders. Nair concluded the presentation by inviting the participants to trust the process of the workshop to help them arrive at their own priorities and plan actions around them.

Dr. Suchetana Banerjee and Gayatri Mendanha, Assistant Professors at SSLA made a presentation to share the institution's template for proposed gender audit. The Symbiosis School of Liberal Arts (SSLA), Pune is part of the Symbiosis International University system. The College is a WISCOMP institutional partner under the HAMSA program from the Western region. A workshop on gender audits was facilitated at the college in September 2019.
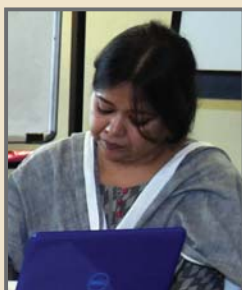
*Dr. Suchetana Banerjee
Assistant Professor
at SSLA*

SSLA is the only institution in the country that offers a four year undergraduate degree program in Liberal Arts. In the fourth year of the program, the students are expected to submit a dissertation on a choice of topic and also publish a research paper in an academic journal. There are two types of Liberal Arts degrees on offer – B.A. and B.Sc. Dr. Banerjee shared that the WISCOMP gender audit workshop gave a wake-up call on many aspects of institutional practices, especially the curriculum. She presented some of the changes that are under consideration after the faculty and senior team learnt about Gender Audits and the issues that were discussed during the workshop.

The enrolment at SSLA is skewed towards women which is not unusual for a Liberal Arts college in India, Banerjee observed. Since the college is a private institution with a tuition fee structure that is steep in comparison to public universities or publically funded colleges, the student body at SSLA is more or less homogeneous. Students come from similar caste and class background (mostly privileged). However, the college is linguistically diverse.

Speaking about the vision and mission of the College, Banerjee shared that it emphasizes respect for diversity. She elaborated on how respect for diversity translates into action on the campus. The college not only has **an Internal Committee as mandated by law but a Social Conduct Review Committee (SCRC).** The committee has representation from faculty and students and the Director heads the committee. There is dialogue before any rules are adopted and implemented.

SSLA also periodically hosts conferences on gender to enhance understanding on gender concerns among students and faculty. It has a mandatory induction program for the students in the first year, where they are sensitized to gender issues and to build awareness on the law. The student representative body has gender balance. The College has in the past discussed issues around the rights of trans gender community and there is a Queer Support group on campus called Queer Crew. The college organizes programs that break conventional gender divides. The College has also experimented with staging of plays on campus where gender roles are reversed.

An important question that came out of the WISCOMP workshop was the distinction between gender equity and equality. Students felt that they had a better sense of what equity and equality mean and the nuances of these terms that are so regularly used on the campus. The presence of faculty from Tata Institute of Social Sciences and St. Xavier's College Mumbai helped to analyze gender equality practices across disciplines.

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[3] The Collective was formed to protest against misogyny in film industry. It was established after one of the prominent heroes of Malayalam cinema was accused of rape by a co-star.

How gender was taught or remained invisible in the science courses was one question that was discussed during the workshop at SSLA campus. SSLA realized that discussion on gender in pure science and mathematics courses was completely absent; Courses on research methods are gender blind. How to create courses that are sensitive to gender concerns will be assessed as part of SSLA gender audit.

In terms of infrastructure there was recognition that some individuals prefer to use gender neutral washrooms and that these facilities should be made available on campus. Similarly, accessibility needs of the differently abled was not something the institution was sensitive to and these changes are being considered by the senior management team.
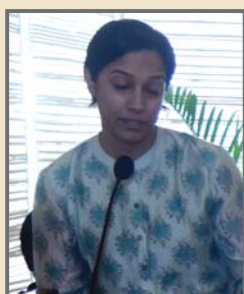
Gayatri Mendanha Assistant Professor at SSLA

Mendanha said that the WISCOMP workshop brought home three critical questions – Who we are, What we do and what we can be? The workshop provided space for collective self-reflection and possibilities of carving a road map for where the college would like to go. How does it see itself evolving? The college is looking at different aspects for their audit-

• **Organizational Culture**: Why is it that more women apply to the program? What can be done differently in the application process so that more men apply? While the college talks about gender fluidity and conducts programs to sensitize students to the rights of trans persons, the college application forms that students are expected to fill at the time of admission still use the traditional frame of binary gender identities and heteronormativity: male/female; father's name and mother's name. The college is considering changing this.

• **Administrative Practice**: On its recruitment policies the college hires female faculty in larger numbers and the gender balance is skewed in favor of women, in terms of support staff the entire body comprises of men. The college is reviewing its policy on this.

Another aspect is that support from leadership is forthcoming as the current Director and Vice Chancellor are both females. While the two women bring their unique style of leadership to the institution, this sensitivity is individual dependent. The college wants to engage with how to institutionalize gender sensitive practices. The WISCOMP workshop provided a space to alert the College to which aspects are part of formal institutional policy and which aspects are still informally practiced.

• **Curriculum**: Engaged pedagogy, dialogue and space to imagine new possibilities are largely limited to the classroom. These pocesses involve faculty and students but non-teaching and administrative staff have been left out of the purview of sensitization.

The college is also considering an audit of gender sensitivity of existing courses in the following disciplines and assessing the curriculum and readings and titles – Media, Psychology, Sociology, Economics.

How gender works in the community outreach programs is another aspect that could be audited. **The evolving gender equity policy at SIU and SSLA are at the heart of it.**

Dr. Gopinath thanked Banerjee and Mendanha for providing a snapshot of the gender audit process at SSLA. She noted that the process of gender audit is slow and long term, it requires dedication to stay the course and to be optimistic. There are always hurdles in change processes and it does not have a linear trajectory. She also noted that it is a process where individuals have to surrender before a larger goal.

Youth Speak

The school students, undergraduates and research scholars from K.I.S.S. made presentations using poetry and dance that encapsulated the learnings from the workshop on the theme of gender justice and inclusion.

Students of K.I.S.S. performing a dance on the theme of girls 'surviving' and 'thriving' in Odisha

The Gender Audit Template

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Director WISCOMP

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, facilitated the sessions on developing a gender audit template on the concluding day of the workshop. At the end of Day 2 of the workshop, the participants were asked to share anonymously the gender equality issues that they felt needed attension on their campus. Gopinath clustered the issues into six thematic areas of the gender audit. The participants were divided into six thematic groups of Gender Audit based on their academic background and their work profile at the institution each participants was assigned to a group. Each group also included students and research scholars. The group that dealt with Student Life and Services comprised entirely of students and was assigned two younger faculty who could provide inputs to the discussion. The groups were provided the following brief:

- Using the issue areas in your campus that are identified, focus on any one or two important issues

- Design research questions to investigate the issue with an intersectional and gender focused approach

- Identify the data you need to collect to answer the research questions

- Identify who you will collect the data from

- Identify who will lead the process and who will support the data collection process

- Decide the timeline based on the university schedule

- Identify how you will analyze the data with a gender lens

Following is a summary of the group discussion and presentations.

Group 1: ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE AND CULTURE

A large number of issues were identified under this thematic rubric during the anonymous feedback. The group shared why they chose particular problems and not others while noting that from a gender perspective all the issues that had been identified were important. As part of the Life Skills program, K.I.S.S. organizes workshops for not only the students on campus but also

for rural communities of Odisha. They saw the audit as an opportunity to enhance the quality of all gender sensitization programs that are being conducted. The members of the group felt the long term goal should be to start a Center for Gender Studies/ Inclusion Studies at the university.

Issues Prioritized: The group felt that without first understanding the exiting beliefs of people on campus, they will not be able to change the culture. There is a lot of misunderstanding among faculty and young people on feminism and confusion about gender equity. Unless there is broad understanding on what these mean there can be no action on creating equity? Gender Audit is an opportunity to help people think about gender equality on campus and also carry out a situation analysis/baseline assessment.

Research Question/s:

- What is the existing understanding of staff on feminism and gender equity?

- What can be done to make sure that the understanding improves?

Methodology and Sample: Three aspects will be kept in mind while designing the questionnaires for the research: gender sensitivity, gender responsiveness and gender specificity.

The questionnaires would be designed keeping in mind different parameters: Infrastructure and Services, Curriculum, Administration Committees, Governance, Budget, Policies and Practices. The sample will include- administrators, faculty, students and non-teaching staff.

Participants discussing how to measure gender sensitivity of curriculum

The group suggested use of Survey Monkey for collecting data from the faculty and hard copy survey instrument for students. They would augment it with Focus Group Discussions using the weekly assembly of students at Amphi Theatre.

Timeline: Four to Six months

Suggestion: It was suggested by the senior management of K.I.S.S. and the facilitators that the group could focus on the impact of the outreach programs and then assess internal programs.

Group 2: ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

This group included senior administrators, researchers from K.I.S.S. and research scholars from KIIT. They shared that it was important to keep in mind that the audit is a positive process and not a fault-finding mission.

Issues Prioritized: There is lack of sufficient encouragement for research at K.I.S.S.. For instance, research scholars who are in the hostel need to submit application and get specific permission if they are to stay in the lab during late evening hours, especially when conducting experimental research. At KIIT, large sums of money is spent to support research and there is a need to ensure that it leads to quality research. Some other issues noted were: Balancing research and teaching responsibilities of PhD scholars.

Research question: How supportive is administrative policy to enhancing quality research? What does the staff – teaching, non-teaching and research scholars– feel about the policies on work hours, leave and support for research? What are the kinds of policy changes research scholars and faculty would like that will support them in carrying out research? What are the policies on compensation for the lab staff for extra work? Keeping the number of hours constant, can there be any flexibility in working time? How are boys, girls and trans people's need for on campus accommodation balanced?

Methodology and Sample: Interview research scholars, faculty, technicians working in laboratories and scholars researching and working at K.I.S.S. and KIIT.

The group also identified a cluster of areas to explore: Opinion on the research policies of the university: time that faculty have to give to research mentoring, leave for faculty to conduct research, financial support that

Seema Kakran addressing questions of a group preparing its presentation on the GA priorities

is offered to faculty for research, policies for research scholars and stipend. Opinion about the policy on residential facilities offered to researchers.

The research team will compare the opinions of different groups to analyze whether policies are gender just. An initial sample size would be about 150.

Timeline: 3 months.

Suggestions: It was suggested that the group could use weekly or monthly time use sheet to look at the ways in which the faculty and administration could help them overcome the challenges they encounter. Who are the groups that need more support? How can policy change to better serve the needs of the groups that encounter challenges?

It was suggested that the research team begin with a small group scanning the existing policies from a few schools and then frame the questionnaire. Designing the questionnaire and getting the right questions will be a time consuming task. If found useful, this audit could even lead to trainings for research scholars for better time management and research skills.

Group 3: CURRICULUM

The group felt curriculum impacts the mindset of the faculty as well as the students. Keeping in mind the environment within which the institution operates, the curriculum can determine how a gender lens will be used in the future.

Issues Identified: One, there is Linguistic sexism; Two, there is lack of spaces for discussing taboo subjects and; Three, there is no student involvement in curriculum design or change. The group prioritized the issue of student involvement and what does a gender sensitive curriculum mean for stakeholders on the

campus. The group observed that the nature of learning process has changed in the last two decades and there is a need to update process of curriculum design.

Research Questions:

Issue 1: Why is it that students are not involved in the curriculum change process? What should be the shape of an interactive process for involvement of students in curriculum design?

Issue 2: What do people understand by a gender responsive curriculum? What are the challenges to developing a gender just curriculum for different disciplines? Focusing on their institution, the group identified four disciplinary areas- Humanities, Social Science, Science and Management? The audit will be designed to identify the criteria on which gender sensitivity can be measured.

Methodology and Sample: The research team decided that they will first carry out a Pilot survey of existing practice and curriculum. Faculty, Students and Administrators from two/three subject areas from each of the four Schools will be identified for this survey. They will analyze enrolment patterns for the optional courses: which ones are more popular among girls and which ones among boys?

Timeline: Three months

Suggestions: The group needs to think more deeply about the term gender sensitive. What is it that they have in mind when they think about sensitivity: is it in terms of texts included/ methodology of teaching/ research/ reading lists. The group may have to think of discipline specific indicators of gender sensitivity.

Gopinath noted that it cannot be an add women and stir approach to creating a gender sensitive curriculum. For example, in the political science curriculum, to include readings on the women freedom fighters could be an important criteria for gender sensitivity. But the inclusion of women's work will not make mathematics or psychology gender sensitive.

One of WISCOMP's partner university, Cotton University has started to explore gender sensitivity in curriculum as part of its gender audit process. Before the full audit, they conducted a pilot, and came up with the following questions: Does the curriculum include different forms of learning? Do faculty use diverse formats of teaching and learning? How does gender get into focus? Are the texts about gay and lesbian cultures included? An important indicator of inclusion can be the inclusion of such texts in the curriculum, particularly for the Humanities and Social Sciences. They also looked at how many questions are there, which address gender issues when the examinations are held?

Are faculty and students going deeper into the texts that are prescribed? A Physics professor could look at gender sensitivity by analyzing how knowledge creation within the discipline is prioritized. What are the kinds of issues that are given preeminence and importance and how does that interact with the lives of men, women, sexual minorities?

How many female scientists for instance, from quantum physics are introduced to the students? How many of their students know anything about the female physicists and their contributions to the discipline?

Gopinath suggested that K.I.S.S. faculty could look at the life skills and the livelihood projects. How are they affecting women? How is the institution breaking/ perpetuating gender stereotypes trhough its outreach work?

Group 4: MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Issues Prioritized: The group underscored the importance of communication and media. Since the mission of K.I.S.S. is tied to the rights of indigenous communities, even a small slip by the institution has serious consequences. The group observed the following methods of existing external communication in addition to the website and brochures:

- Volunteers take information to the villages and when the students come back, they bring feedback from the villages. A parents committee gives feedback to the institute.

- There is a large dedicated Media team at KIIT

- The university funds research on media studies. There is an Advisory Committee that works on Tribal women, livelihood, panchayati raj system. However, the research that is produced is published in low key online journals.

The group proposed that the website of the institution and the language used in the description of the programs etc. need to be closely looked at through the gender and inclusion lens. With help from a senior anthropologist they proposed an audit of the website content.

Research Question: How gender sensitive and inclusive is the website of the institution? Are the

success stories that are used in brochures and public outreach materials gender sensitive?

Methodology: The group suggested working with an expert ethnographer to analyze the content of the website and brochures.

Suggestion: Gopinath suggested that besides the proposed audit the institute could create an archive of Ethnographic narratives of the students and their families. Since the institute already tracks alumni, it will help develop ownership of the inclusion mission.

Group 5: STUDENT LIFE AND SERVICES

Issues Prioritized: Students do not organize programs at K.I.S.S. Administration and faculty conceptualize the programs and the only role for the students is at the stage of implementation.

Research Questions: What is the importance of the different value based programs being organized for the students? What are the pros and cons of students as organizers? What is the receptivity to student organized creative and dialogic programs? How open are students to the inclusion of different members – women, men and trans persons in the programs. What are the programs students want to organize?

Methodology and Sample: The group would survey faculty and students: existing and alumni. From the students who are participating in existing program the team would gather opinion on whether taking the lead will make them more interested.

Timeline: 6 months

Suggestion: The group could think of how the issue they had identified was gendered. What and how could the gendered patterns be unveiled? What kinds of programs were being supported by faculty/ students/ alumni? What did it reveal about existing culture on the campus? How open is the student community to organizing inclusive programs?

Group 6: INFRASTRUCTURE AND CAMPUS LIFE

The KIIT university and the K.I.S.S. institute have state of the art infrastructure on campus. Some of the participants had noted that while infrastructure is excellent and the institution is a green campus, there are issues with human infrastructure:

1. There is a Grievance Cell on campus but it only takes care of grievances submitted by women. The group felt that the grievance cell should be made truly inclusive and accept complaints from trans persons and men.

Research questions: Is the campus infrastructure gender inclusive, if yes? What are the practices or structures that make it inclusive? If not, what are the problems and in what aspects is the campus still lagging behind? What can be done to make it gender inclusive? Evaluate if there is acceptability for a forum with a physical space for sexual minorities?

The groups was interested in looking at not just toilet facilities but also look at participation and involvement of trans community. K.I.S.S. has the first program in Raigada District where the team is working with 60 trans genders. The trans genders are involved in creating awareness about rights of lactating mothers in tribal communities. This experimental program should be assessed so that learnings can be used by other universities.

2. The campus has infrastructure for yoga, meditation, spiritual wellbeing, a faculty center and gyms on all campuses. Classes are held for mental and physical well-being of the students and faculty.

Research Question: What is the usage pattern of the facilities that are available on campus for physical and mental well-being of students and faculty? What are the issues that different groups face in using these facilities? Who are the people on campus who are utilizing the facilities optimally? What is it that the campus community wants in terms of physical and mental well-being? What are the constraints that students and faculty face in accessing the facilities – timings for example? Process of getting permissions for usage?

Time frame: 4 months

Suggestion: Prioritize the issues so that the purpose of the audit is realistic.

Dr. Prasanta K. Routray CEO K.I.S.S.

Dr. Prasanta K. Routray, CEO, K.I.S.S. gave the closing remarks at the workshop. He said that the workshop was like a retreat for the senior members of the faculty and it has not only provided space for reflection on existing gender sensitization programs on K.I.S.S. and KIIT campuses but also what course it should chart for the future. Whatever has been discussed at

the workshop will be the basis for an action plan. It will then be taken up by both the campuses in the coming months.

Dr. Routray shared that K.I.S.S. is creating an archive of the case history of the students, their parents and grandparents and this history is annually updated. In that sense the institution in practiving inclusive pedagogy. The workshop has helped the team strategize on infusing gender perspective into the archival project.

Gopinath noted that the groups had created a basis for the template for the gender audit that they could work on. The K.I.S.S. template could be useful for other HEIs that are looking for a systemic policy for the induction of students from the tribal communities and other marginalized groups. Emulation of K.I.S.S. template could give voice to many other groups that have been in the shadow of silence.

Nityakalyani Ramasubramaniam, HAMSA Program Evaluator, discussing workshop learnings with the participants (Top left Corner) and Participating faculty members from K.I.S.S. and KIIT universities preparing and presenting Gender Audit priorities for their campuses.