



Report on Collaborative Activity

Workshop on Women and Violence

29-31 August 2016

1. **Name of the Collaborative Activity:** Workshop on Women and Violence
2. **Nature of Activity:** Three-day workshop for students of the MA in C4D programme to understand the various dimensions of gender-based violence
3. **Name of the Collaborating Agency/ Individual with affiliation, and contact details:** Organized by Dept. of Mass Communication & Journalism, Tezpur University in collaboration with North East Network (NEN), Assam (Contact person – Ms. Monisha Behal, Executive Director and founder. Mobile: 9435197151)
4. **Summary of collaboration:** North East Network (NEN) is a women’s organization working in the northeast region of India with a focus on women’s human rights. Ever since its inception in 1995 their role has been that of a facilitator to empower women of northeast around issues of livelihood, health, conflict and governance through capacity building, awareness raising, networking, research and advocacy. Their work has been aimed at bringing out gendered understandings of human right situations in the region whether it’s in the context of violence, livelihood, conflict, natural resource management or health. The workshop was organized with the following objectives –
  - To know more about ‘feminism’.
  - To understand the existing gender division of labour
  - To know the deep impacts of Patriarchy
  - To make us aware of the acts/laws protecting the rights of women

5. **List of detailed activities under the collaboration:**

**DAY ONE (29<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2016)**

Day one of the workshop started with a small inaugural session. Mrs. Anjuman Bora introduced students to Dr. Monisha Behal and Maam Sheetal. They have been associated with NEN since a long time. After introduction Dr. Monisha gave an insight about NEN and how it works. They started off the workshop discussing how gender and sex works. They explained the exact difference between this two terms that is gender is socially constructed and sex is



biologically constructed. How everything is based on gender and it is difficult to change these rules which have been continuing in the society since a long time. On the first day they explained about three important topics that is:

- Gender/Sex
- Patriarchy
- CEDAW

The second most important topic that the mentors dwelt upon was Patriarchy. Patriarchy is a social system in which adult males hold primary position in the society. There are different views regarding patriarchy and they are –

- Traditionalistic view
- Pseudo-Scientist view
- Radical Feminist view
- Marxist Feminist View
- Socialist Feminist view

- Students also learnt about the Hindu Succession Act which was passed in 2005. Through this act Hindu woman were entitled to equal property rights.
- Students were screened a small animated video made by UNICEF called “The Impossible Dream” which showcases a woman’s endless struggles and her shattered dreams.

The third most important topic was CEDAW that is “The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women”. Article 1 of the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (1979) defines the discrimination against women as ‘any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the reorganization, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It is often described as an international bill of rights for women.

Mentors also discussed about the concept of equality and how equality should be in terms of access, opportunity and outcome. Access in case of how both the sexes should have equal access to resources and rights. Opportunity in terms of how both the sexes should have equal opportunities in every sphere of life for example in job sectors etc. Outcomes in terms of how every outcome should be equal.



Students also learnt about the various principles of equality which are-

**SAMENESS APPROACH** – Assuming that boy and girl have the same strength and they can do same type of work physically.

**PROTECTIONIST APPROACH** – Women are denied equality of opportunity on the ground that denial is in their best interest. This approach recognizes the problem as a weakness or inferiority in women and not in the environment which needs to be corrected.

**SUBSTANTIVE APPROACH** – This approach recognizes that women are in unequal position and may have to be treated differently in order to benefit equally. It ensures equality of results, and not only of means.

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

Students were assigned various activities that day. During the first half of the workshop students were divided into two different groups under the category of rural men and rural women. On different charts they had to showcase their working hours and define the amount of work and rest hours they have the entire day. Through this activity mentors wanted to know about the working patterns of an average rural men and women and how much rest they get during the entire day. This activity actually showed the difference in the amount of work between a man and a woman and the difference in the rest hours between them.

#### **DAY TWO (30<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2016)**

It was 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016, the second day of our workshop with North East Network (NEN) under the mentors of madam Monisha Behal and the program assistant of NEN, madam Sheetal Sharma.

- The day started with the introduction of various acts and laws for protecting the rights of women. Acts like Criminal Law Amendment Act 2013, ICRW and CEDAW. And students were also asked to present our views on how the rights of women can be violated.
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 is an Indian legislation passed by the Lok Sabha on 19 March 2013, and by the Rajya Sabha on 21 March 2013, which provides for amendment of Indian Penal Code, Indian Evidence Act, and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 on laws related to sexual offences.
- ICRW has been the world's premier applied research institute focused on women and girls for almost four decades. Their evidence-based insight seeks to optimize programs,



influence policies and identify scalable solutions that help them lead safer, healthier and more empowered lives.

- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly.
- And apart from that students had discussions on many other social problems in which woman are preyed by the society. The Spiral of Violence, womb to tomb were many such terms through which we came across and the impacts and outcomings were explained.
- Spiral of violence was discussed in which students came across the violation of women rights since their womb to tomb. The rights of women are violated not even before their birth, even the foetus has to go through stages of violence, (female foeticide, discrimination in providing proper nutrients during pregnancy of the mother), infancy (female infanticide, sexual violence), childhood (sexual harassment, incest, child marriage, objectification of female body), teenage (restricted mobility, voyeurism, violation of reproductive health rights), adulthood (stereotyping female, discrimination in jobs, dowry, physical/verbal/emotional violence, marital rape, sexual violence in conflict, acid attacks, forced disrobing) and also in old age.
- The Awareness Videos like “It’s my Fault”, “Bell Bajao - got milk?”, “boys don’t cry” were screened made by some leading organisations like Vogue India, Drishti and ICRW. These videos are made in order to make people aware and make them learn to raise their voice against violence that are existing in our society against women.
- Students also came across the story of Birubala Rabha, who has been tirelessly fighting the cause of witch hunting since 1980’s. Witch-hunting is a process of tracking down people deemed as witches, which often involves episodes of public frenzy. Although it seems like an outdated idea and concept, remotely rural Assam, witch-hunting is not uncommon.

### DAY THREE (31st August 2016)

#### MORNING SESSION (10:30am onwards)

1. The session started with a recap of the previous day. One by one, the participants shared their individual experiences. The participants spoke about their learning from the interactive sessions of the previous day.
2. After this, the participants were introduced to the **Protection of Women against Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA)** which is a civil and secular law that addresses



the needs of women in situations of violence and applies to women of all communities. It also categorically recognizes the right of a woman to live a life free from violence and also to reside in a shared household. This act also expands the definition of violence to include mental, verbal, physical and economic abuse and threats and demands for dowry. It is applicable not only to married women but all women in a family as well as women in relationships akin to marriage. The resource person then discussed about the **Domestic Incidence Report (DIR)**. DIR is similar to FIR but this is filed only in case of domestic violence.

3. The NEN team then showed a video titled **AIB: Rape-It's your Fault by All India Bakchod** which responds to the string of abusive and hateful remarks made by people against women.

After the video, they discussed about the **Sexual Harassment of Women at the Work Place Act, 2013 (SHWWP)** and showed a video on **Laws against Sexual Harassment of Women** so that the participants get a better idea of the act. This act says that the sexual harassment against women can be categorized into two segments: one 'quid pro quo' which means 'this for that' underlining sexual harassment caused by those in authority/power in workplace resulting in noticeable or tangible employment related action. The second one is 'hostile work environment' in which the abuse does not result in tangible employment action but creates an unfriendly working environment making a women employee uncomfortable or threatened. In both cases, the women can make a complain to the following **Internal Complaints Committee (ICC)** for organizations with more than 10 employees or **Local Complaints Committee (LCC)** for organizations with less than 10 employees.