

ACTIVITY REPORT

**Centre for Women's Studies & Development
Himachal Pradesh University
"NAAC Accredited 'A' Grade University"
October 2018 to March 2019**





HIMACHAL PRADESH UNIVERSITY

(NAAC Accredited 'A' Grade University)

Summer Hill, Shimla - 171005

Professor Sikander Kumar

Vice-Chancellor



Message

It gives me immense pleasure to know that the Centre for Women's Studies & Development, Himachal Pradesh University, is bringing out its activity report for session 2018-2019.

Centre for Women's Studies and Development has been regularly engaging in organizing Gender Sensitization Campaigns, Colloquiums, Workshops, Seminars, Conferences, Health Camps and outreach programmes.

I place on record my deep appreciation of the commendable work done by the Centre for Women's Studies and Development of our university for involving youth of University as gender champions to work for ensuring women's dignity in society and spreading gender sensitization campaign.

I wish the Centre success in its future endeavours.

(Sikander Kumar)

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From the Director's Desk...



The constitution of India grants equal rights to men and women, but disparities remain. Though women have come a long way, yet there is so much more to achieve in terms of women education, safety and empowerment. Gender Sensitization involves creating awareness about gender issues and working towards creating an enabling environment of gender justice where men and women can work together with a sense of personal security and dignity. Centre for Women's Study has emerged as a link between academics and activists, social work and policy making. We at the Centre have been sensitizing gender issues through various activities like debates, discussions, seminars, gender sensitization campaigns, theatrical performances and other forms of arts. By facilitating research and extension work, aim is to enhance the visibility of women and gender issues within the academic community of the University and in wider society.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sushma'.

(Professor Sushma Rewal Chugh)
Director
Centre for Women's Studies and Development
Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla

Promoting Gender Equality through Gender Champions

Centre for Women's Studies and Development, Himachal Pradesh University, organized one day workshop on the theme 'Promoting Gender Equality through Gender Champions' in Himachal Pradesh University Vice Chancellor's Committee room on 10th October 2018. Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Prof Sikander Kumar was the Chief Guest on this occasion and Pro Vice Chancellor Prof. Rajinder Singh Chauhan was the Guest of Honour. Dr. Daizy Thakur, Chairperson State Women Commission of Himachal Pradesh was the special guest on this occasion. Dr. Richa Member Secretary Jan Abhiyan Sanstha & Associate Professor, Symbiosis School of Liberal Arts, Dr. Anjali Dewan Associate Professor & HOD Department of Home Science St. Bede's College Shimla, Mrs. Archana Phull, Bureau chief Daily Post, Mrs. Devkanya thakur, Director and Film Maker, Mrs Mamta Paul, Prof Aparna Negi, Department of Economics, Dr. Ajay Srivastav, Associate Professor in Journalism in ICDEOL, H.P.U. and Dr. Runa Mehta, Assistant Professor, Department of Laws were the key speakers on this occasion.

Programme was inaugurated by Lighting of lamp by the respected guest followed by Kulgeet. Director Centre for Women's Studies and Development Prof Mamta Mokta welcomed all dignitaries, guests, participants and introduced the theme of the workshop. Centre for women's Studies and Development, Himachal Pradesh University appointed 37 gender champions of various Departments of





Himachal Pradesh University for the Session of 2018-19. Prof Mamta Mokta also introduced about the scheme of Gender Champions in Higher Education Institutions. She exhorted the youth from the University to come forward as gender champions for creating positive social norms in educational institutions that value girls and their rights. She also informed the participants that as gender champions they had to follow an integrated and interdisciplinary approach for understanding the social and cultural construction of gender. The aim of the workshop was to make the young boys and girls gender sensitive and also to create positive social norms that value the girls and their rights.

Chief Guest Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Sikander Kumar on this occasion in his inaugural speech stressed the need of promoting Gender Equality in institutions of Higher education. He stated that women were the back bone of the society. Position of women in any society and community has been the true indicator of its cultural evolution. He added that both men and women needed to work together in a peaceful manner in order to eradicate the discrimination against half of the population because of gender bias. He also stressed that women should also come forward to empower other women. He concluded with his remarks that women should take a stand for themselves, and should not compromise their dignity for any reason.

Special guest Dr. Daizy Thakur, Chairperson State Women Commission Himachal Pradesh, in her address said that education has always played an important role in enabling girls to secure other rights. Education has been the foundation for girls' development towards adult life. She stressed the need for equality amongst boys and girls for development of society. She appreciated the enthusiasm of



students to work as gender champions for a social cause.

Dr. Richa Member Secretary Jan Abhiyan Sanstha & Associate Professor, Symbiosis School of Liberal Arts expressed her views on Gender issues in Environment. She told that Women and girls were particularly vulnerable to climate change and climate-related disasters, also to displacement due to mining, hydro power and other development projects. How could we talk of sustainable development and empowering women when we might not have islands and homes to live in the future? She also stressed that environment played an important role on gender issues. If we try to destroy our nature, nature would destroy our whole life.

Dr. Anjali Dewan, Associate Professor & HOD Department of Home Science St. Bede's College Shimla gave her presentation on Importance of Nutrition Literacy in Maintenance of Health. Health has been defined as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not mere absence of disease or infirmity. Food has always been essential for survival. It also supplied micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) and phytochemicals that would provide not only calories but also a variety of critical functions to ensure the body operated optimally. The unprecedented increase in diet-related diseases has been linked to poor eating habits and a diminishing understanding and skill set around food and its use. Good nutrition has been an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle. Combined with physical activity, diet could help to reach and maintain a healthy weight, reduce risk of chronic diseases and promote overall health. Evidence has shown that girls were given less food and health care than boys, especially in Northern India. Girls are fed on mother's milk for shorter periods, given less medical

attention, fewer consultations and visits to the doctor, and are often taken very late to the hospital in an emergency. Female children are given less food, both in quality and quantity. They are undernourished compared to the male children. Girls in India face higher risks of malnutrition, disease, disability, and retardation of growth and development. She emphasized that good nutrition was an important part of leading a healthy lifestyle. Combined with physical activity, diet could help to reach and maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of chronic diseases and promote overall health.

Mrs. Archana Phull, Bureau Chief Daily Post, expressed her views on Role of Media in promoting Gender equality. She said that Media has always played a very important role in our daily life. Media has helped to form our social values. Partnering with private sector organizations, Women have been promoting the use of media, especially social media, as a powerful tool to advocate for elimination of violence against women and to promote gender equality. Media has the power to shed the light on what is frequently stereotyping images, actions and values that are no more acceptable on all humanitarian levels because they represent all kind of violence and gender discrimination. The media has been playing a role in shaking the mentalities and promoting positive images for women who have emerged as strong leaders and powerful survivors. Media should highlight positive masculinity. Many examples have shown that masculinity has been usually represented by negative values such as violence, dominance, cruelty, illegal or inhuman actions. Media are way too often diffusing and showcasing this negative representation. Thus, they have been playing a role in the acceptance of the society, by men and women, to these negative values as the norm to depict men and masculinity. Around the world, female characters in films and television take far less space than male characters. They do less interesting things. They are judged by their appearance. We all know that women and girls are slightly more than half the human population. If women realize their strength, they can do better in the field of media also.

Dr Devkanya Thakur highlighted the Role of Film and Gender equality. She stressed that the gender equality was a very sensitive issue. She highlighted the discrimination practices run by the society and vehemently opposed these types of practices but she accepted that it was hard to change the social norms which were responsible for gender discrimination in our society. She stressed that these evils could only be stopped if women took initiatives.



Mrs Mamta Paul in her address highlighted the Policies and Programme of Himachal Pradesh Government for Promotion of Women's Rights. She discussed the various schemes of Himachal Pradesh Government for welfare of women like Mukhya Mantri Kanyadan Yojna, Beti hai Anmol Yojna, Widow Remarriage Yojna, Janani Suraksha Yojna, Sukanya Yojna etc. Women were motivated to come forward to take benefits of these schemes.

Dr Ajay Srivastav Associate Professor, Department of Journalism in his address raised his concerns over gender inequality practices among the persons with disability especially with the girls.

Dr Runa Mehta in her presentation discussed the Laws for women protection. The status of women has been a benchmark of social process and has always been a very important part of the human development index in the human rights jurisprudence. She expresses her views about the criminal Laws protecting the women's rights and discussed how a girl or a woman could use these rights to protect her dignity. She also described how these rights could be misused by the culprits to exploit the noble persons.

Prof. Aparna Negi also expressed her views on Gender issues in society. She requested all gender champions to work together to reduce gender inequality. Women have been playing a key role in the development, both in the context of the family and society at large. Gender based discrimination represented the ugly face of the society

In the end Director Prof. Mamta Mokta thanked all the participants and resource persons to make this workshop a successful event.



International Women's Day

A one day workshop based on the theme, 'Balance for Better' was organized on 8th March 2019 by the Centre for Women's studies and Development Himachal Pradesh University International women's day. Hon'ble Vice chancellor Prof. Sikander Kumar was the Chief Guest on this occasion. Mrs. Punita Bhardwaj, I.G. Police was the Guest of Honour.

Prof. Arvind Kalia, Dean of Studies, H.P.U., Prof. Kamaljeet Singh, Dean Students' Welfare, H.P.U., Prof. Arvind Bhatt, Dean Planning and Teachers' Matters and Prof. Nain Singh, Chief Warden, H.P.U. also graced the occasion. The event was attended by a large number of University teachers and non-teaching employees and various heads of the departments of H.P. University.

Prof. Sushma Rewal Chugh, Director, Centre for Women's Studies and Development welcomed the guests. She briefed the gathering about the theme of the workshop. 'Think equal, build smart, innovate for change' was the theme for international women's day, 2019. Women have surely come a long way, yet there is so much more to be achieved. International women's day campaign theme of 'balance for better' sought gender balance for a better world to live in. Although the constitution of India grants men and women equal rights, gender disparities remain. Research shows gender discrimination mostly in favour of men in many realms including the workplace. Discrimination affects many aspects in the lives of women from career development and progress to mental health disorders. While Indian laws on rape, dowry and adultery have women's safety at heart, these highly discriminatory practices are still taking place at an alarming rate, affecting the lives of many today.

Chief Guest for the workshop Prof. Sikander Kumar, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor in his presidential address highlighted the disparities existing in the Indian society on the basis of caste, creed and gender. He emphasized upon the need to empower women through education so that they could make a visible





International Women's Day Celebrations





International Women's Day Celebrations





contribution to the society. He stressed upon the need for women to actively participate in all the spheres of life. It has been observed in Indian politics that husbands propose the names of their wives as candidates and then after getting elected they run the show on their wives' behalf, who become mute spectators. Gender inequality is a long-term problem in our society and females are discriminated in many ways in the social context of India, although legally women have equal right. Thus, there is a great need to sensitize the society on gender issues so that there would be no discrimination on the basis of gender.

Mrs. Punita Bhardwaj, I.G. Police, shared her own experiences being the first woman police officer of the State. She was of the opinion that with hard work and determination all obstacles could be overcome. Educating a girl child and encouraging her to be independent is the key to women empowerment.

Prof. Sonia Khan, Director Institute of Vocational Studies addressed the problem of gender inequality by highlighting the fact that patriarchal society favours men. There are separate sets of rules established by society for men and women. Though women are coming forward and breaking stereotypes, yet there is so much more to be achieved.

Dr. Runa Mehta, Associate Professor, Department of Laws, emphasized upon the need for women to be aware of the laws that favour women. She spoke at length about the legal rights of women and the need to exercise these rights.

Mrs. Rajkumari, former E.C. member in her address spoke about the plight of women in rural areas. She stressed upon the need to have stringent laws to enforce a complete ban on female infanticide. In the end Prof. Sushma Rewal Chugh thanked all the resource persons and the entire gathering for their valuable support for making the workshop a success.

Self Defence Camp

Self defence techniques are extremely important in the world that we live in today. Women are referred to as weaker sex in the society. They are victims of molestation, teasing, rape and domestic violence. A society cannot progress unless there is gender equality. Women empowerment could prove to be a substantial step towards achieving gender equality. A physically and mentally fit woman is capable of facing the world confidently.

The basic motive behind organising the self defence camp was to teach self defence techniques to young girls and make them aware of challenging surroundings. It was also organised to prepare these girls mentally and physically for a situation of street harassment, or eve-teasing, which one might encounter or witness in their lifetime.

Centre for women studies and development organized a self defence camp for the girl students of the University in the University Hostel Auditorium from 11th to 16th March, 2019. More than 130 girls participated in the self defence camp. Mr. Ajay Kumar Thakur, trained Karate Coach from Indira Gandhi Sports Complex, taught various moves to girls that could be used in any adverse situation.



Gender Sensitization Campaign

A gender sensitization campaign was launched for the students of the University on 12th March, 2019 in the Girls' hostel auditorium by the Centre for Women's Studies and Development, H.P. University, Shimla. Prof. Nain Singh, Chief Warden H.P. University was the Chief Guest. The event was attended by a large number of University students and hostel wardens. Dr Neerja Sharma Bhardwaj, Medical Officer Ayyurveda (Himachal Pradesh University Health Centre) was the key speaker of the event. Programme was started with lighting of lamp. It was followed by honoring of chief guest, speakers and wardens of the hostel who had helped the Centre in organizing various activities on a regular basis.



Prof. Sushma Rewal Chugh welcomed the guests. She briefed the gathering about the concept of 'gender'. Gender Sensitization involves creating awareness about gender issues and working towards and creating an enabling environment of gender justice where men and women can work together with a sense of personal security and dignity. 'Gender' is a socio-cultural term referring socially defined roles and behaviors assigned to 'males' and 'females' in a given society; whereas, the term 'sex' is a biological and physiological phenomenon which defines man and woman. In its social, historical and cultural aspects, gender is a function of power relationship between men and women where men are considered superior to women. Therefore, gender may be understood as a man-made concept, while 'sex' is natural or biological characteristics of human beings.

Chief Guest Prof. Nain Singh, Chief Warden, Himachal Pradesh University on this occasion in his inaugural speech appreciated the Centre for organizing such awareness campaign. Prof Nain Singh highlighted the importance of equality among genders. He opined that through knowledge, skills, and leadership development of girls and women, a resilient, empowered, and motivated generation could be built. Such a generation would have high aspirations for self and a commitment to gender equality and equity.



Gender Sensitization Campaign in Girls' Hostel Auditorium, H.P. University, Shimla





Dr. Neerja Sharma Bhardwaj, the speaker for the day emphasized the importance of health. She apprised the audience about the various health issues peculiar to girls like menstrual problems and hygiene, anemia prevalent in girls and ways to deal with it. Menstrual Hygiene Management is a subject of 'Silence' and discussion of the topic among women or even between mother and daughter is very limited. Menstruation is a very important natural body process among women which cannot be avoided. It is a distinct step into womanhood for the adolescent girls.

Therefore it is imperative for every one of them to have awareness about menstrual hygiene. She stressed on good menstrual hygienic practices such as use of sanitary napkins; washing and cleaning; how to dispose sanitary napkins, followed by precautions to be taken during the period and dietary habits, so, as to enable them to lead a healthy reproductive life in future. Dr. Neerja also shared information regarding breast cancer. She shared helpful guide about breast health and preventive measures to stop breast cancer probability. She spoke at length about the overall well being. She also encouraged the gathering to put forward their health related queries.

In the end Prof Sushma Rewal Chugh Director Centre for women's Studies and Development Himachal Pradesh University thanks all the participants to make the event successful.

Outreach Programme in Chari Village under Gender Sensitization

Gender Sensitization Campaign and health awareness campaign was organized by Centre for Women's Studies and Development Himachal Pradesh University in Chari village of Shimla district on 14th March, 2019. More than 100 rural women participated in the event. Village Pradhan Mrs. Manju Verma welcomed the staff of Women's Study Centre which comprised of Prof. Sushma Rewal Chugh, Director, WSC & D, Dr. Seema Thakur, Project Officer and Mrs. Anju Devi, Research Fellow.

Prof. Sushma Rewal Chugh addressed the problems generally faced by women. She briefed the gathering about issues arising due to gender inequality and patriarchal society. She stressed on the need to practice gender equality at home as home is the first and the most important education provider institute for the child. Gender equality begins at home. It is important for parents to treat girls and boys equally (food, sports, education, equal celebration at birth, etc.). Parents are the first role-models children have, so if they grow up seeing gender inequality being exercised or tolerated in this relationship, they are more likely to be exposed to negative gender role stereotyping. It is important for parents to share household chores as well as outside chores, participate equally in financial matters, exhibit joint decision making, and treat each other with respect.

Pradhan of Chari village, Mrs Manju Verma spoke on the various issues and problems faced by the women folk of that particular area. She drew attention on the discriminating practices imposed by





Glimpses of Outreach Programme in Chari Village





the society on women. She encouraged and motivated women to gather courage to break age old taboos related to their confining period during their menstruation cycle and emphasized upon the importance of empowering women through gender sensitization as one of the key criteria to unlock the potential of women.

Dr. Neerja Sharma Bhardwaj addressed the health issues concerning rural women. Research has it that most women deprioritize matters pertaining to them, let alone going for regular health checks. Women enthusiastically participated in the discussion and put forward many queries which Dr. Neerja satisfactorily answered.

Miss Neha Negi, Advocate High Court, apprised the rural women of Chari Village on the legal rights of women.

In the end Dr. Seema Thakur thanked all the resource persons and the entire women folk of Chari Village for their valuable support for making the event a success.



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