WORKSHOP ON '*GENDER INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE*' FOR POLICYMAKERS FROM ITEC COUNTRIES

(November 12/13, 2020)

by

NATIONAL GENDER CENTRE & CENTRE FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS,
LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI NATIONAL ACADEMY OF ADMINISTRATION, GOI
UNDER e-ITEC PROGRAM OF MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, GOI

BACKGROUND

"We cannot fulfil 100% of the world's potential by excluding 50% of the world's people. The evidence is clear; equality for women means progress for all."

– Ban Ki Moon

As per the Global Gender Gap Report 2020, released by World Economic Forum, at the global level an average of 31.4% gender gap remains to be closed. The report reviews gender gap between men and women in 149 countries on sub-indices such as health, education, politics and economy. Of these four sub-indices, political empowerment is the index that has recorded the largest gender gap. Only 24.7% of the global Political Empowerment gap has been closed till 2020. Economic Participation and opportunity recorded the second largest gap with only 57.8% gap been closed so far. Educational Attainment has recorded closing of 96.1% gap and Health and Survival recorded closing of 95.7% of the gap.[1]

The Gender Gap Report highlights the need for immediate action to bridge the pervasive gender gap. However, the same would not be possible in absence of gender-inclusive policy interventions. Gender inclusion is the cornerstone for good governance. Any policy bereft of gender-inclusion is likely to perpetuate discrimination, inequality and marginalisation. One of the ways to achieve this is capacity building and gender-sensitisation of policymakers. With this objective, the National Gender Centre & Centre for Children's Rights conceptualised and conducted a two days' workshop on 'Gender Inclusive Governance' for policymakers from ITEC Countries.

ABOUT THE CENTRE

The Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) is a premier institution in India, entrusted with the task of training senior members of the Indian Civil Services. The National Gender Centre (NGC) was established under the aegis of the Academy with the foremost aim of mainstreaming gender and children's rights in policy making, programme formulation and their implementation.

Over the 25 years of its existence, the Centre has successfully undertaken the task of mainstreaming gender and children's rights in all courses and programs run at the Academy such as the Induction, In- Service and Mid-Career Training Programmes for officers from All India/Central Services. The Centre also conducts programmes for other stakeholders on various subjects pertaining to gender equality and children's rights including gender and child budgeting and planning.

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[1] Available at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf.

1 | P a g e

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

In pursuance of the Centre's mandate, an online workshop on *'Gender Inclusive Governance'* for policy makers from countries that are part of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Program (ITEC) of the Ministry of External Affairs, GoI was designed and conducted on 12th and 13th November, 2020. The objective of the two days e-ITEC workshop was to provide a platform to senior policymakers from across ITEC countries to discuss the significance of making governance gender inclusive and to brainstorm on the ways and means of achieving the same. The program was attended by 51 participants from 17 countries across the continents. The diversity of the participants in terms of countries, gender, work profile and experience added value to the discussions and QnA sessions and was key in making the program a success.

In the workshop themes such as "Why Gender Inclusive Governance", "Gender and Development", Representation of Women in Governance" and "Mainstreaming Gender in Public Policy" were discussed by renowned academicians, researchers and practitioners through examples from the real world. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, certain theoretical concepts were also discussed and illustrated. While the research based and practical experience of providing quota for women in local governments in India (under the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1992-93) was discussed in detail, the best practices from across the participating nations were also shared by respective participants.

With a view to compile basic information about the participants, their knowledge and expertise, unique experiences and perceptions and to collate the best practices across countries, a Google form with eight questions was circulated to all the participants. A total of 49 responses were received including 30 female and 19 male responders. The questionnaire was filled by the participants during or after the workshop. The questionnaire was divided into three sections-

First section: Basic Conceptual Framework

*Second Section: Country specific data and perceptions*

Third Section: Global Good Practices

In order to meaningfully interpret the data and to discern trends and patterns, the responses have been represented as simple pie-charts and bar diagrams. The collation of the data is followed by question-wise comments highlighting the rationale behind inclusion of that question, a brief analysis of the responses and finally, overall observations and recommendations.[2]

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[2] Confidentiality and privacy of all the participants has been ensured.

Section I- Basic Conceptual Framework

Question 1: 'Sex' and 'Gender' are two words that are often used interchangeably. Do you think they imply the same meaning?
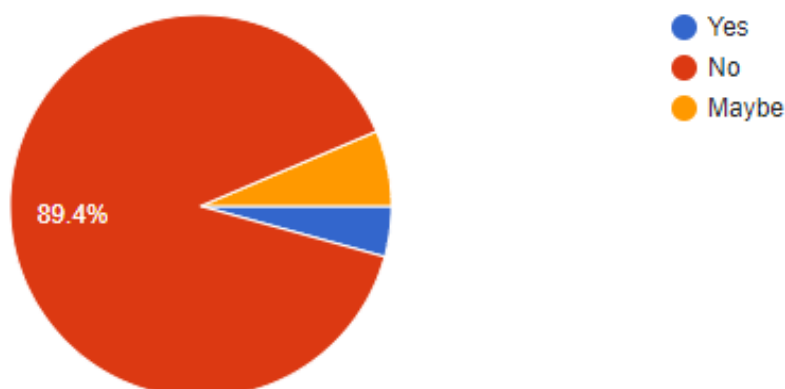
Analysis:

This question was incorporated in the questionnaire to estimate the ability of the cohort to conceptually distinguish between the terms "gender" and "sex".

The terms "gender" and "sex" are often used interchangeably. However, conceptually they may be distinguished from each other for the purpose of viewing governance from a gender lens. Gender is a sociological construct which implies a conglomeration of characteristics, norms, behaviour and roles that the society associate with being a man, a woman, a boy, a girl and so on. Whereas sex, though related to gender is distinct from it as it refers to the physiological or biological characteristics of a male, a female or an intersex person.

One's understanding or conceptualisation of one's gender is a personal experience which might not conform to one's physiology or 'sex' assigned at birth. Sometimes, it may not even correspond to the societal norms, behaviours and roles associated with their gender identity. Thus, interchangeable usage of the terms "gender" and "sex" may lead to a flawed conclusion that one's sex is one's gender and that gender roles are static or biologically assigned.

A conceptual clarity regarding "gender" and "sex" is pivotal to the overall understanding of gender based marginalisation, inequalities and discrimination and enables one to look beyond the binary of "man" and "woman". Thus, enabling in formulation of gender inclusive policies and a gender inclusive implementation of those policies.

Question 2: A list of statements is appended below. Each of these may be attributed to 'Sex' or 'Gender'. Choose one option that is correct in YOUR opinion.

These questions were appended to gauge the basic understanding of participants regarding gender specific norms, behaviours and roles.
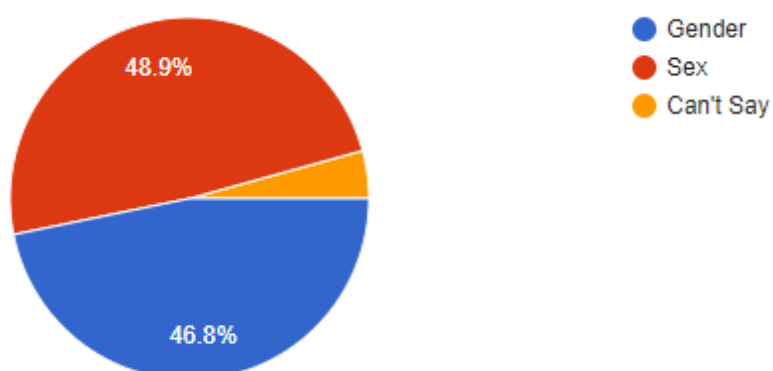
STATEMENT (A) A doll is a common gift for a five-year-old girl however a person will hesitate to gift a doll to a five-year-old boy.
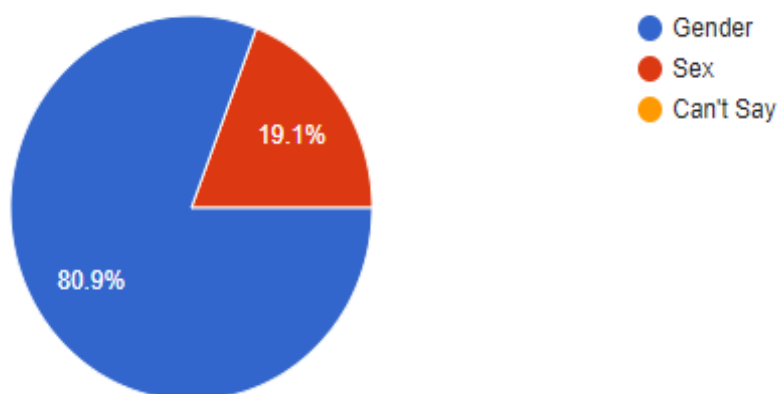

STATEMENT (B) A teenage girl would comfortably wear a frock or trousers/pants, but a teenage boy would never wear a frock.
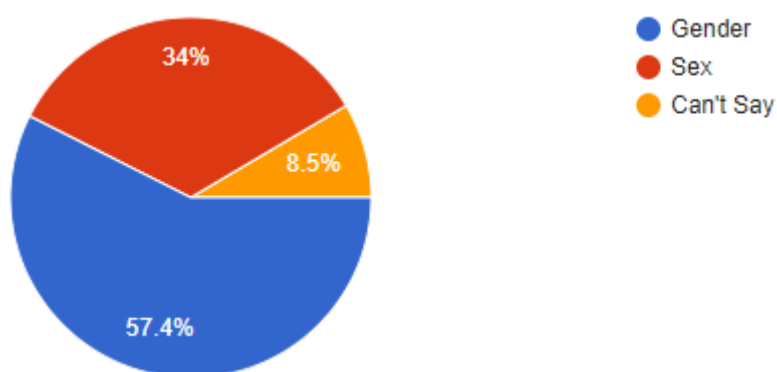

STATEMENT (C) Women are entitled to maternity leave after childbirth.

STATEMENT (D) Cultural and societal processes have led to marginalisation and ostracisation of transgender persons forcing them to resort to begging, prostitution and other sub-human or illegal means of earning\ their livelihood.

136615/2020/LBSNAA
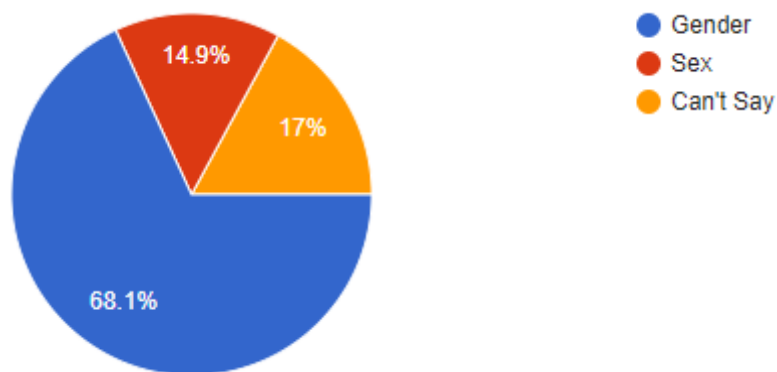
STATEMENT (E) The office facility should provide a separate crèche and a feeding room for lactating mothers.
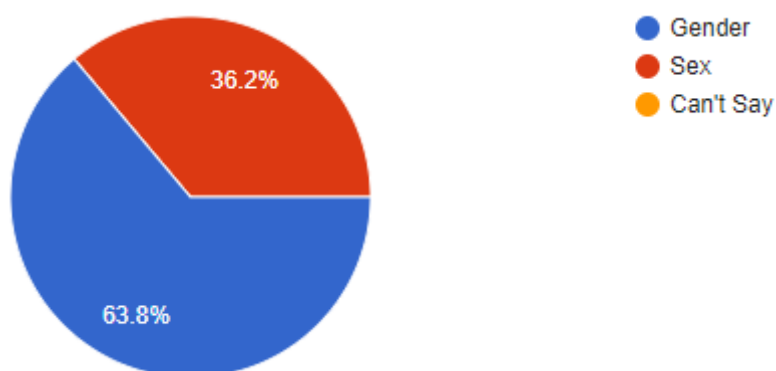
Question 3: Gender based violence is aggravated when it intersects with other factors such as race, religion, socio-economic status etc.
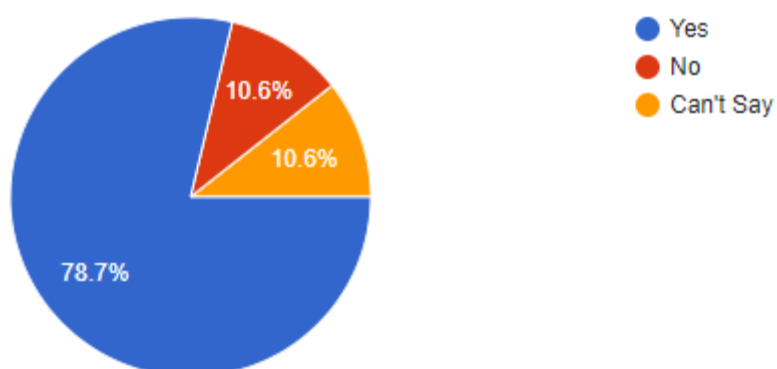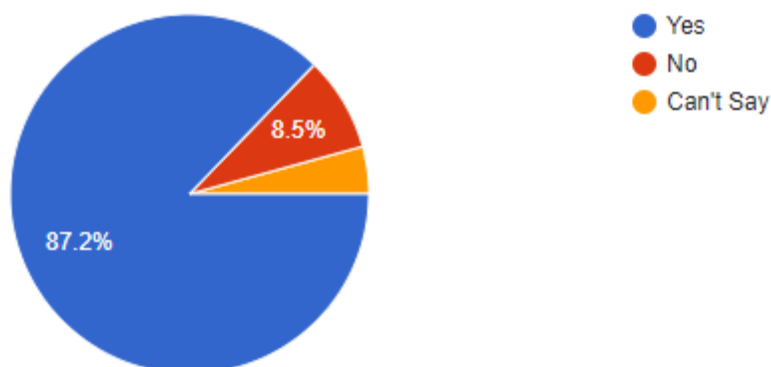

Analysis:

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" – Simone de Beauvoir

Gender is not inherent, rather acquired. Instead of being a 'benign variation' among individuals, gender becomes a basis for discrimination, inequality and violence. Gender creates a hierarchy leading to asymmetric distribution of power within families, society and the globe. An ability to see how gender unfolds in everyday interactions and decisions, how gender identities in children take shape, how are gender roles and boundaries reinforced by agents of socialisation like parents, family, teachers and community role models is key to gender inclusive policy design.

When gender based discrimination intersects with other factors such as race, sexuality, disability, age, socio-economic status and so on it creates a unique experience of discrimination for each individual. This is referred to as intersectionality. Gender based violence is not uncommon. Gender based violence becomes graver when it coalesces with other forms of discrimination.

Gender and intersectionality was an important component of the workshop. Public policies, if oblivious of the terrain of multiple marginalisation, may subvert the interests of those whose experiences are distinct because of their unique 'social positioning'.

Question 4: Do you think that working conditions such as long working hours and unpredictable schedules have negative impact on women's workforce participation?

Analysis:

In recent past, there has been some positive growth in terms of participation of women in labour market. However, on average, only 55% of adult women are in the labour market, versus 78% of men. The wage gap (the ratio of the wage of a woman to that of a man in a similar position) is still over 40% and income gap (the ratio of the total wage and non-wage income of women to that of men) is still over 50%. In many countries, women lack opportunities to start a company or make a living by managing assets as they still face difficulty in accessing credit, land or financial products.[3]

Lower workforce participation of women has been a matter of concern for several ITEC countries. Most women perform household chores and assume role of care-givers. The care economy is predominantly gendered.[4] However, this work remains unaccounted, unacknowledged and unpaid. There is a need to not only recognise this 'silent, unseen' work done by women but also to increase their workforce participation. Higher participation of women in organisations is known to facilitate a positive shift in work culture towards better work-life balance.

There are several factors which limit women's participation in the labour market. Our world is still predominantly a "man's world" where a woman constantly negotiates to carve a niche for herself. The patriarchal arrangement or structure of our society still considers 'indoors' to be the rightful space for women. In such a scenario, the demands of job market requiring long working hours, unpredictable work schedule jeopardises chances of women to compete at same level as men. Besides work responsibilities, women are still expected to take care of the domestic sphere. Thus, it is crucial to recognise the multiple work related factors

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[3]Available at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf.

[4] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LX51zdidWA.

that put women at a disadvantage from entering the job market and attaining financial autonomy.

Question 5: What are your views regarding representation of women in the following spheres in your country? Choose the option that is correct in YOUR opinion.

The participants are engaged in policy making roles in their country. The two-day workshop, rather than being a one-way mode of instruction, was a platform to exchange ideas, information and strategies to make policy gender-inclusive. Data on these parameters was gathered to understand the participants' perception regarding representation of women in roles of responsibility in their respective countries. Additionally, answering these questions would have helped participants to reacquaint themselves with the state of affairs in this regard.

 (A) POLITICS
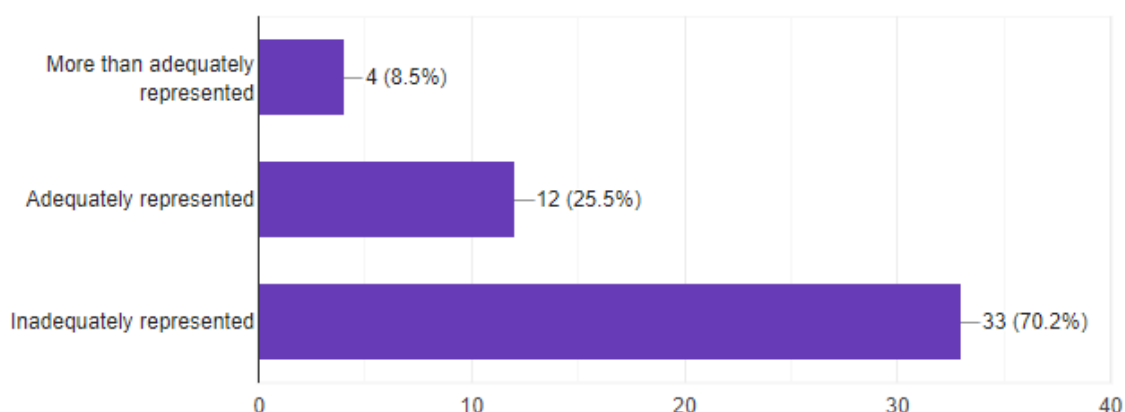
Analysis:

As per the Global Gender Gap Report 2020, released by World Economic Forum, only 24.7% of the Global Political Empowerment Gap has been closed in 2020. Till date, out of 35,127 global political seats only 25% are occupied by women; only 21% of the 3,343 ministers are women; and in some countries, women are not represented at all.[5]

A staggering 70% participants acknowledged that women are inadequately represented in politics in their country. Poor representation of women in key political positions indicates absence of the perspective of the other half of the population. Non-incorporation of their viewpoint, version or narrative in decision making adversely impacts policy making.

The workshop addressed this concern by referring to 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (India). Through this an attempt was made to address the concern of women's representation, at the local level of self-governance, by reserving a certain percentage of seats for women in both panchayats and municipalities. These monumental amendments transformed the political landscape of local level self-governance in India. Such affirmative action was initially riddled with challenges such as "dummy candidates" where the real decision making power lay in the hand of their male relatives. However, with time, 'educated, qualified and capable' women are assuming these significant decision making roles and

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[5] http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf.

bringing about a positive change in governance at local levels.[6] They are also serving as apt role models for younger generations of men and women, inspiring them to work for the local community with zeal.

By referring to these constitutional amendment acts, an attempt was made to highlight that greater participation of women in political positions in one of the means of making governance gender-inclusive.

(B) SENIOR LEVELS IN JUDICIARY.
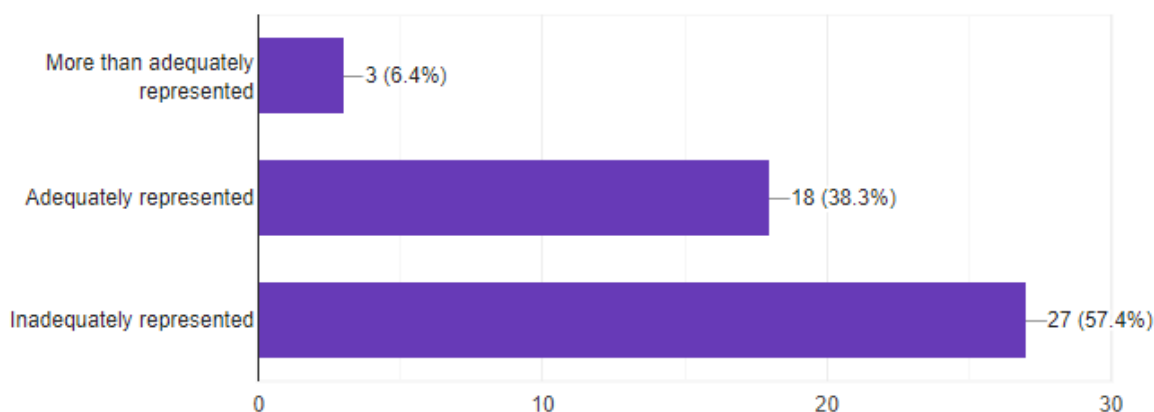
Analysis:

"Improving the representation of women in the judiciary could… go a long way towards a more balanced and empathetic approach in cases involving sexual violence."

– K. K. Venugopal (Attorney General of India)

Inadequate representation of women in courts is a malady that affects almost all the countries across the globe. Underrepresentation of women at senior levels of judiciary may imply structural barriers at three levels, namely, at entry level, promotion level and retention level.

Judiciary, entrusted with the task of interpreting laws, has the ability to further the gender-inclusive governance by adopting a gender-sensitive interpretation of laws. Improved representation of women and other sexual minorities in judiciary will not only improve gender-sensitive interpretation of laws but also transform the criminal justice system, particularly in delivery of justice to women and children through gender inclusive court room practices and procedures.

(C) SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS IN PRIVATE COMPANIES.

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[6] Chattopadhyay, R., & Duflo, E. (2004). Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India. *Econometrica, 72*(5), 1409-1443. Retrieved December 14, 2020, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/3598894.
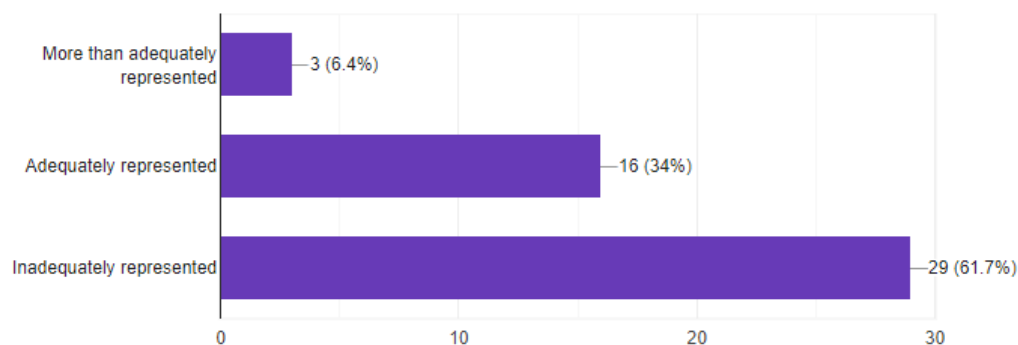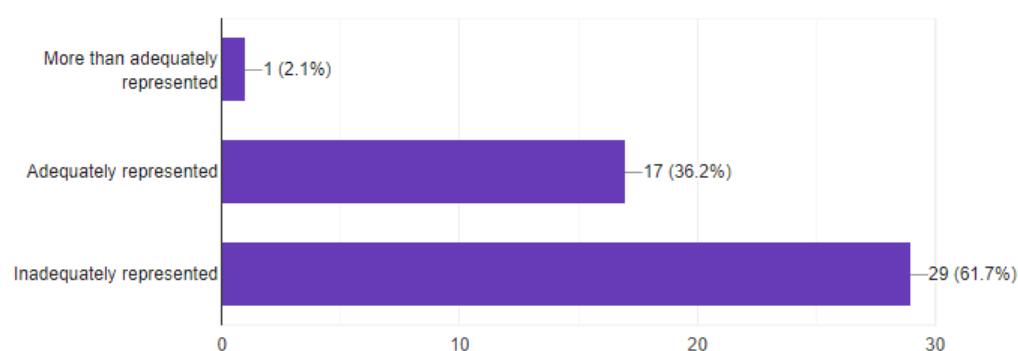
Analysis:

Globally, the percentage representation of women in senior managerial positions, in private and public sector, is only 36%. Women represent just 3% of Fortune 500 CEOs and less than 15% of corporate executives at top companies worldwide.[7] Apart from multiple structural barriers at the level of education, families and companies, the maladies of gender wage gap, sexual harassment at workplace and glass ceiling hamper the representation, retention and progression of women.

In situations of a female employee seeking leave on account of pregnancy, most of the private companies prefer dropping their female employees from jobs instead of giving them maternity leave. Even if maternity leave is given it is mostly unpaid. The woman returning to work is mostly assigned a lower role in comparison to her male counterparts. Despite women being primary care givers for children, elderly and the sick, adequate child care leave is not provided to women managers, forcing many to seek transfers or forgo promotions or resign.

Higher representation of women in senior managerial positions in companies is known to have a positive impact on work culture as well as profitability. Gender inclusive policy designs may also nudge the private sector to adopt policies that recruit, promote and retain women, particularly at senior managerial levels.

(D) ARMED FORCES.

Analysis:

Gender affects almost every segment of our lives- education choices, lifestyle, behaviour, appearance and careers. Professions, such as armed forces are considered less suitable for women. Some professions- teacher, nurse, doctor – are considered more suitable for women.

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[7] Available at https://hbr.org/2010/03/women-in-management-delusions-of-progress.

The professions involving care giving are considered feminine and those involving bravery and valour are considered masculine. Gendering of professions severely limits people's ability to make career choices.

Even if there has been a gradual shift towards acceptance of women in armed forces, they are almost absent from conflict area/battle field assignments and senior decision making levels. There are only a handful of countries across the globe, which allow women in combat roles.[8] Armed forces are not untouched by instances of gender bias, sexual harassment and discrimination.

In a first, Indian Air force recruited women as fighter pilots in 2016 and has been doing so every year since then. In 2020, the Supreme Court of India, in a landmark judgement ruled that all women army officers in India are eligible for permanent commission. The entry of women through short service commission had an adverse impact on their promotion, rank, benefits and pension. The argument advanced on lines of "physiological limitations and social norms" to prevent women from being granted permanent commission was dismantled by the Court which reiterated that "right to equality is a right to rationality". Furthermore, the argument advanced to prohibit women from being granted commanding roles on the ground that the "composition of rank and file being male, and predominantly drawn from rural background, with prevailing societal norms, the troops are not yet mentally schooled to accept women officers in command" was out rightly rejected by the apex court.[9]

Increased participation of women in armed forces will not only be instrumental in achieving gender equality but also making the armed forces gender-sensitive, improving confidence of women officers and their enhanced contribution in key positions of command, strategic planning and organisational management.

Section II- Country specific data and perceptions

Question 6: Based on statistics from your country, answer the following set of questions.
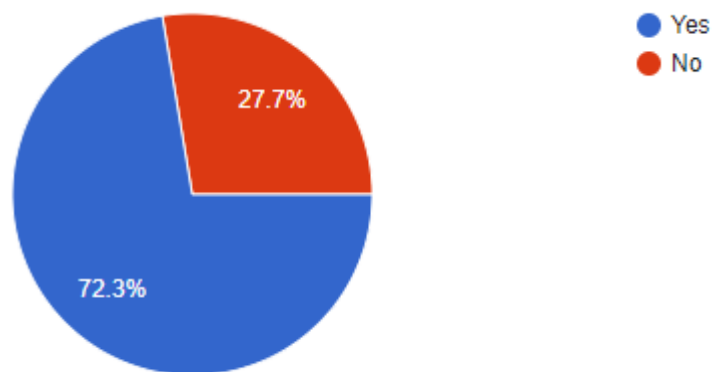
These questions were designed for acquainting participants with the condition of women and sexual minorities in their countries respectively. These questions highlight the need for gender-inclusive governance for policymakers in their respective nation states. Also, makes an attempt to elucidate the subjective responses of the participants to understand the causal factors responsible for gender based inequalities and discriminations and ways to address them.
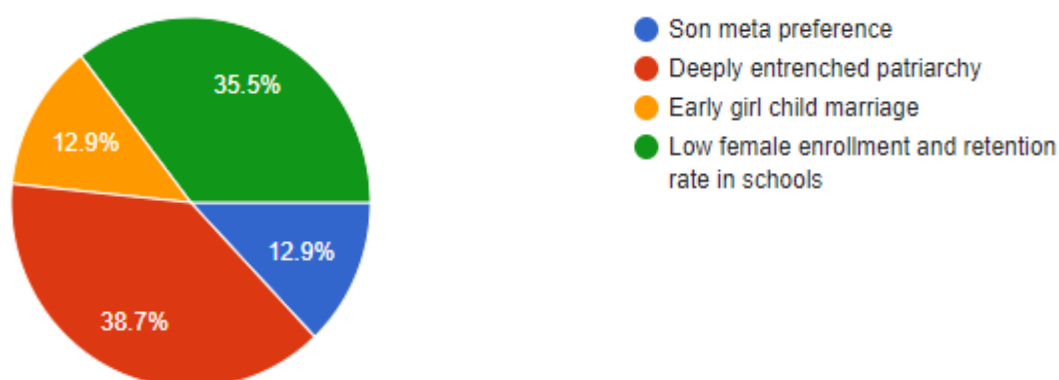
   (A) Literacy rate in your country

Is the female literacy rate lower than male literacy rate in your country?

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[8]https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/indian-army-to-allow-women-in-combat-roles-other-countries-that-have-broken-gender-barrier/story-KYbefAECyKwYex6DgYOQLL.html.
[9] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-51528141.

If Yes, according to YOU, what is the most probable reason for female literacy rate being lower than male literacy rate in your country?
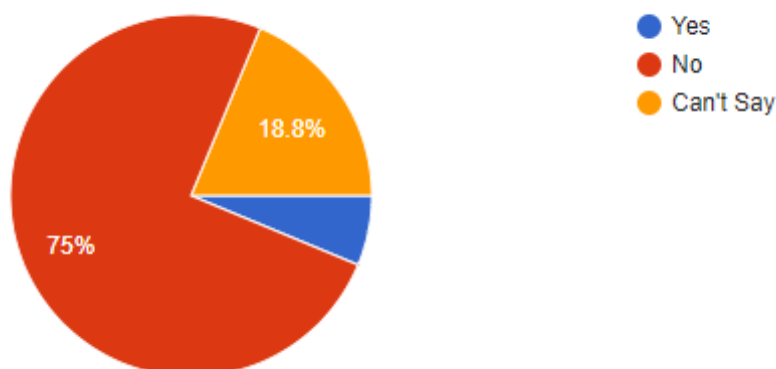

If, according to YOU, there are some other reasons for female literacy rate being lower than male literacy rate in your country, you may enumerate them.
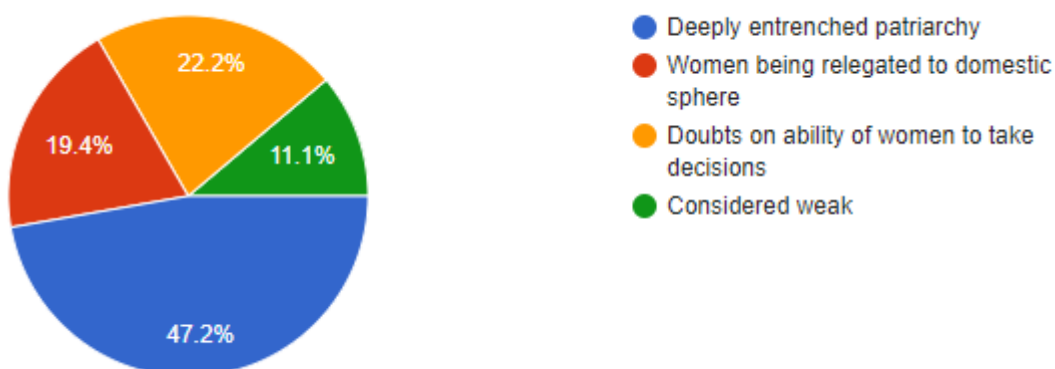
Responses:

1. Some other possible reasons for low literacy rate for women in **Cambodia** include early marriage, absence of schools in nearby location, and daughters expected to share work responsibilities with parents.
2. Education is free in **Mauritius** and all the children (boys and girls) have to attend school compulsorily. Statistics show that girls outperform boys at school, but the gender gap relate to the choice of subjects whereby very few girls opt STEM subjects than boys.
3. In **Kenya**, some communities still give preference to male child over female child. Besides this, early girl child marriages, poverty and FGM are some other reasons.
4. In **Palestine**, poverty is another major factor responsible for poor female literacy level.
5. In **Kenya**, girls are seen as source of dowry; teenage pregnancy results in high drop outs from school; cultural beliefs that an educated woman would make a bad wife; it is preferred to send the boy child to the school rather than the girl child.
6. In **Palestine**, another prominent reason is the socio-cultural perception which considers domestic sphere to be the most apt for women.

(B) Head of State in your country

In last fifty years, adequate number of women have helmed position of the Head of State in your country?

If the number is inadequate, then what is the most probable reason for this inadequacy?
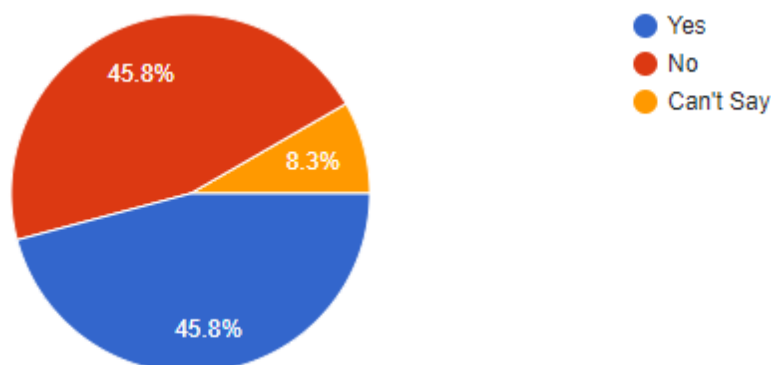

If, according to YOU, there are few more probable reasons for this inadequacy, in your country, you may enumerate them.
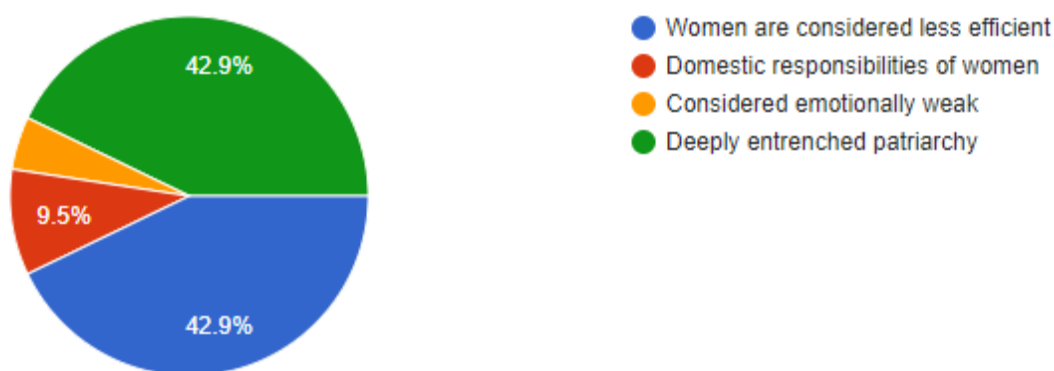
Responses:

1. In **Fiji** women are given less encouragement and opportunities to participate in decision making activities.
2. In **Kenya** strong cultural bias against women manning positions of responsibility
3. In **Kenya** gender bias that women are weak and unsuitable for positions of responsibility.
4. In **Mauritius** various factors act as barriers to women's participation in politics. These include, inter alia, political, socio-economic and cultural barriers which predominantly constrains or prevent women's participation in leadership positions; male resistance to women assuming leadership positions; absence of policies and legislation to ensure equal participation of women; discriminatory appointment and promotion practices; lack of financial resources - cost of campaigning is very high; lack of family support; lack of confidence and leadership skills ; male dominated domain; lack of access to information.
5. In **Palestine** women considered more suited for domestic sphere rather than position of power or responsibility

(C) Gender Wage Gap in your country

Do you think women are mostly paid less than men for the same amount of work?

If Yes, according to YOU, what is the most probable reason for the gender wage gap?

If, according to YOU, there are few more probable reasons for the gender wage gap, in your country, you may enumerate them.
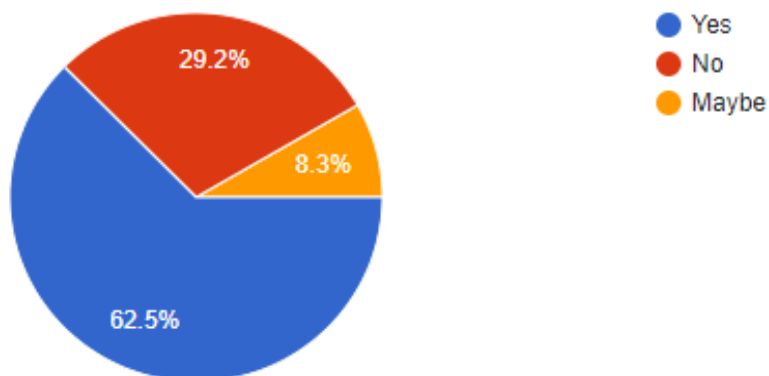
Responses:

1. In **Morocco** it is the lack of support or opportunities available to women to negotiate for better wages.
2. In **Kenya** persists a cultural and gender bias against women which considers them unsuitable for certain well-paying jobs.
3. In **Kenya** another probable reasons for gender wage gap are poor literacy level; lack of opportunities and resources to acquire requisite skills; marginalisation of the women.
4. In **Mauritius** the gender wage gap is paramount in private sector whereas government sector still is fair enough in terms of wages.
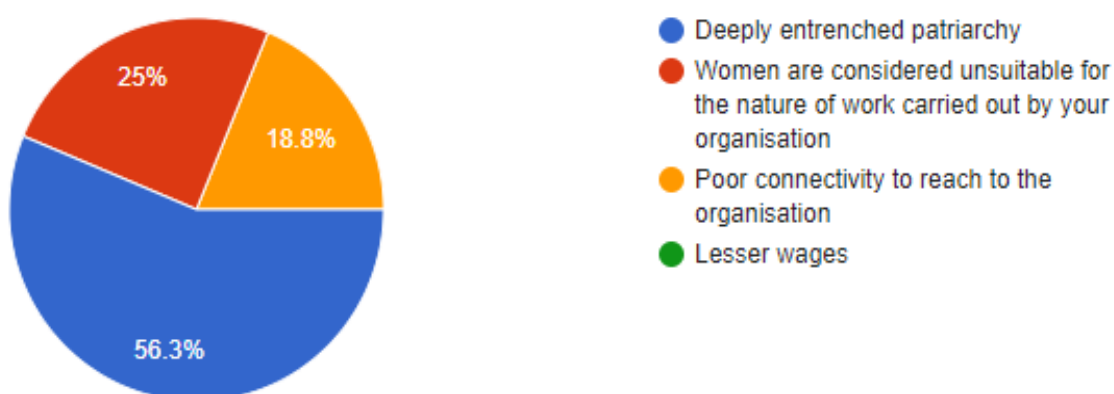
Section III- Global Good Practices

Question 7: Based on your experience in your organisation, answer following set of questions.

(A) Does your organisation have adequate representation of women and third gender?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

(B) If NO, what is the most probable reason for such inadequate representation?

- Deeply entrenched patriarchy
- Women are considered unsuitable for the nature of work carried out by your organisation
- Poor connectivity to reach to the organisation
- Lesser wages

(C) Have YOU personally experienced any gender based inequality in your organisational set-up?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
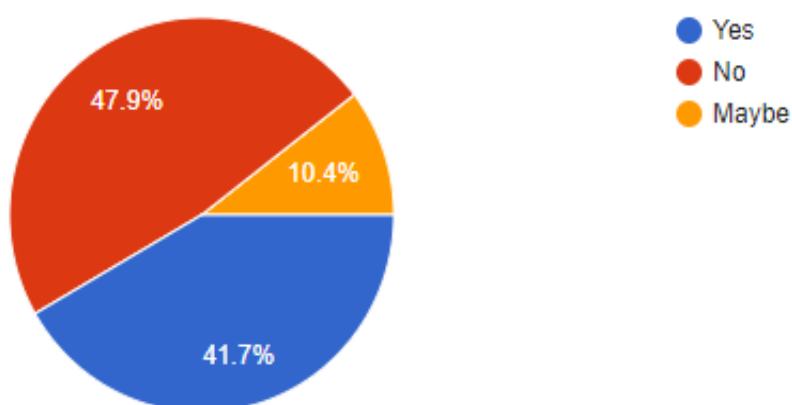
If you are comfortable, you may share your experience of gender based inequality. Your privacy would be protected.

Responses:

1. Subjected to gender based discrimination at the time of promotion and assigning of positions of responsibilities.
2. Some work stations are solely reserved for women whereas men are posted to the far away areas.
3. Experienced discrimination and was at receiving end of sexual harassment at workplace.
4. Discrimination while assigning of job responsibilities. I was given clerical responsibilities whereas a male candidate possessing the same educational qualification and experience was given managerial position.

Question 8: According to YOU, in the past five years, what are the major strategic interventions (any new law, legal amendment, policy or scheme) taken at the national level in your country to improve gender-inclusion?

Responses:

1. The Government of the **Republic of Mauritius** introduced in the Budget Speech of 2016/2017 the Gender Responsive Budgeting Initiative on a pilot basis through the allocation of around USD 5, 600 to five (5) Ministries for the implementation of gender sensitive initiatives. In order to sustain the momentum, the GRBI has been extended to all Ministries in the financial years 2017/2018; 2018/2019; 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 through the inclusion of a "Vote Item on Gender Mainstreaming in Government's Programmes / Policies". In addition, a specific Chapter dedicated to Gender Mainstreaming has been introduced in the Government's Three-Year Strategic Plan for 2018/2019-2020/2021; Amendment has been brought to the Employment Rights Act in 2015 to extend the maternity leave from 14 to 16 weeks, followed by amendment brought to the Act in January 2018 to allow payment of a remuneration for those mothers reckoning less than 12 months service during their maternity leave; Amendments were brought to the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act in 2004, 2007, 2011 and 2016 so as to provide for protection to all family members living under the same roof, harsher penalties for non-compliance of orders of the Court and for the rehabilitation of perpetrators through counselling amongst others. Moreover, provisions have been made in the Budget 2020-2021 to amend the PDVA and strengthen the protection given to victims and make Perpetrators Rehabilitation Programme compulsory. A Parliamentary Gender Caucus was set up in 2017 which provides a platform for members of the National Assembly to discuss on issues and policies related to women in the society and come up with concrete solutions; The National Code of Corporate Governance for Mauritius (2016) was launched in 2017. The Code lays down the main principles of governance which encompasses the concept of gender balance and equality under 'Director Appointment Procedure', Board structure, Board Diversity whereby all organisations are required to ensure appointment of Directors/Board members from both genders i.e. at least one male and one female. The Companies Act and the Statutory Bodies (Accounts and Audit) Act have also been amended to ensure gender representation on Board, i.e. on every Board, there should be at least one woman as member of the Board.

2. **Kenya's** Constitution follows two-thirds rule to ensure equitable gender representation in Parliament. Article 81 (b) of Kenyan Constitution reads as follows: "Not more than two thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender". Still,

the parliamentary representation of women in Kenya is very low. The legislature is yet to enact a specific legislation to operationalize the Constitutional mandate. The general attitude of judiciary and government is a matter of concern as it constantly tries to justify non-implementation of the principle on grounds of unavailability of resources, costly implementation of the scheme and several other factors

3. In **Cambodia** position for women are reserved in leadership positions in public sector. At least one woman at a post; and 20%-50% priority given to women in entrance exams for selection of civil servants. However, it is worth mentioning that still the participation of women is very low. There exist de facto and de jure gaps. Many women are unable to take advantage of the policies due to low level of literacy, corruption and other biases.

4. To prevent the menace of girl child marriage, recently in **Palestin**e the legal age for marriage of girls is raised to 18 years. Early girl child marriage was a matter of concern in Palestine. Early child marriage perpetuated poverty, teen pregnancy, high maternal and infant mortality, domestic violence etc. Palestine committed itself to eliminate child, early and forced marriages by 2030 in line with the SDGs. This was also crucial as Palestine acceded to UN CRC and CEDAW in 2014. However, there are reports that there is not a complete ban on early child marriage and it can be circumvented in situations of pregnancy, waiver by religious court etc.

5. In **Maldives**, Gender Equality Act was passed in 2016 requiring 30% quota reservation for women in local council. The preamble delineates the objective of the Act - provisions of general principle to achieve gender equality, policies to prohibit discrimination based on gender and the duties and responsibilities of State institutions and other relevant parties to achieve gender equality in the Maldives. The Act prohibits discrimination based on gender, either directly or indirectly. The Act categorically defines and prohibits several forms of gender based discrimination- systemic, based on circumstances, direct, indirect and so on.

CONCLUSION[10]

An analysis of Section I on understanding of Basic Conceptual Framework reveals the following-

1. An understanding of *Gender* as a psychologically ingrained social construct, rather than being an innate quality of individuals, that actively surfaces in everyday human interaction and leads to gender based inequalities and violence, is crucial in attaining gender inclusive governance at the levels of policy formulation as well as implementation. Policy makers need to have a gender lens to be able to discern a *'Gender Neutral Policy'*. *'Gender Inclusive Policy'* must take into account the existing inequalities and account them in the policy design to provide a level playing field to all citizens.

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[10] **Limitations of the Study:** 1. The participants are self-nominated hence this is not a representative sample. The compiled responses of the participants, therefore, may not be generalizable.

2. Most of the participants filled the form during or after the workshop when the conceptual frameworks had been discussed in the class. This might have affected the responses.

2. An understanding that Gender is no more recognised as a binary or even a spectrum, rather as complex, multi-layered and dynamic phenomenon which may not fit into any number labels or boxes. It is a subjective experience. Policy makers need to have a basic understanding of such a framework in order to make governance gender inclusive.

3. An understanding that Gender, instead of operating in isolation, intersects with other identities like class, caste, race, religion, sexuality etc. to heighten the vulnerabilities of certain individuals or groups is key to a more accurate and impartial interpretation of the social environment of governance in any country or society. As policy makers strive to tackle multiple social phenomenon and developments, conceptual frameworks like *'Intersectionality'* are useful for them to come up with gender inclusive policy designs and implementation strategies.

However, for a deeper understanding of these concepts and to develop the ability to meaningfully utilise such an understanding in practice, the concepts need to be reinforced and disseminated across the various levels of governance. ***This may be achieved by a universal and standard module on 'Gender and Intersectionality' across training programs, across departments and across levels of governance.*** *A module that aims to ingrain the three key conceptual frameworks as listed at points 1, 2 and 3 above along with a focus on enhancing knowledge, skills and attitudes of the participants would go a long way in engendering gender inclusion. Also, periodic and incremental reinforcement of the above concepts is necessary to achieve a long term impact. Therefore, such training must be a continuous process rather being a one-time activity.*

With regard to Section II on Country specific data and perceptions, it appears that the perceptions and experiences of participants are largely in line with the Global Gender Gap Report. The participants appear to be aware of the ground realities, which may be a good first step and hence very heartening. Most of the participants identified "deeply entrenched patriarchy" as one of most probable reasons responsible for gender gap between men and women in politics, economy, education and positions of responsibility. Patriarchy by engendering false consciousness perpetuates gender based discrimination, inequality and marginalisation. Addressing this system and its generated vices is the need of the hour. The response of one of the participants during the workshop shows the way forward. She says, "cooking and cleaning are life skills and not gender roles that women must perform and men must not. Gender inclusion begins at home."

One of the key objectives of the Workshop was to provide a platform to participant policymakers to exchange ideas on making governance gender-inclusive. Section III on Global Best Practices contains best gender inclusive policy interventions enacted or implemented in participant's countries. These best practices can serve as 'model interventions' useful in formulation of the gender-inclusive policies in other nation states with necessary variations to suit the specific needs of the country adopting them. These are incorporated here with an objective that a larger dissemination of these would be useful for mutual learning and mutual benefit.

AUTHORS[11]

Alankrita Singh,
Executive Director, NGC&CCR, LBSNAA, Mussoorie, Dehradun, India

Swati Yadav,
Teaching Associate, NGC&CCR, LBSNAA, Mussoorie, Dehradun, India

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

Testimony - 1

The Workshop was engaging and refreshing, especially during this difficult period of Covid-19. Sharing same platform for learning with participants across the world was an exhilarating experience.

The Conference exposed me to the idea how India is addressing the issue of gender equality and political representation. In Kenya, we face challenges in fully implementing the 2/3 gender principle, anchored in the Constitution.

There is a lot to compare between India and Kenya. The Panchayat system in India is similar to Kenya's Nyumba Kumi Maendeleo Ya Wanakwake Organisation system. Just like Indian women, women in Kenya have been relentlessly volunteering and helping in sensitising the community in dealing with the present crisis resulted from Covid-19 pandemic.

Lastly, I would like to state that on a personal level I learned about the gender-based inequalities across the globe, especially with reference to Intersectionality theory. The panel discussion and analysis presented during Conference enabled me to draw parallel and understand situation in Kenya in a better sense.

Hudson Shiverenje Mwangu

Kenya

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[11] *Alankrita is an officer of the Indian Police Service currently engaged in a full-time training role at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration at Mussoorie. As Executive Director of NGC&CCR, she was Course Coordinator of the e-ITEC program. She is interested in Women's and Children's Human Rights issues, specifically from the perspective of elimination of various forms of violence against them.*

Swati is a Teaching Associate at NGC&CCR, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration at Mussoorie. She is a law graduate with an interest to work on issues of gender-based sexual violence and Children's Rights.

Testimony - 2

The experience in the course was fruitful in terms of integrating knowledge and experiences of gender policy initiatives in the current context. It was interesting to know how India, a country with a vast population and regional differences, is implementing diverse practical and strategic measures to make progress on the issue. Personally, I found this very significant, in the sense that Peru also has cultural differences among its geographical regions.

It was also relevant to know a bit more of the Indian society and how these initiatives are in hand with. On the other hand, I wanted to hear more about the main hurdles and potential challenges that India expects to improve further. For instance, how males are going to be integrated as key actors in the whole process. Also, how gender issues are being confronted in the current COVID 19's pandemic.

I know that always the time is short to cover everything, and I believe you did it well. Again, I want to thank you for the chance to participate in this very interesting course. Congrats.

Edgar Pozo Ore

Peru

136615/2020/LBSNAA

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