BREAKING THE SILENCE: ISSUES OF GENDER AND EQUALITY IN INDIA

A Workshop Report

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Manav Rachna International University, Faridabad
National Capital Region

Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace
an initiative of
Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama
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Acknowledgements

This report documents the proceedings of a workshop *Breaking the Silence: Issues of Gender and Equality in India* organized at Manav Rachna International University (MRIU), Faridabad. The workshop was part of the Women in Security, Conflict Management, and Peace (WISCOMP) project *The Medium is the Message: Together Against the Violence of Gendered Exclusion*. WISCOMP is grateful to Students Stand #with Malala, a partnership between the Malala Fund and Participant Media, which made the workshop possible. We especially appreciate the support extended to the WISCOMP team during the project by Ms. Charity Tooze, Consultant, The Malala Fund.

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*Meenakshi Gopinath*
Director
WISCOMP
Introduction

How are gender stereotypes perpetuated? What role does popular media play in the perpetuation of gender stereotypes? Why is women’s care work undervalued by society? What are the links between patriarchy, discrimination and violence against women? What can educational institutions do to promote gender equality?

These were some of the questions that WISCOMP’s initiative Breaking the Silence: Issues of Gender and Equality in India sought to foreground in its intervention with Manav Rachna International University (MRIU), Faridabad. The intervention at the University consisted of two workshop sessions, one for the students and a subsequent one for the faculty members and administrative staff. The workshop was conceptualized as part of the WISCOMP project, The Medium is the Message: Together Against the Violence of Gendered Exclusion. The project seeks to bring together diverse groups of stakeholders within educational spaces to dialogue on women and girls’ equal access to educational rights.

The intervention at MRIU is a significant part of the project due to the university’s location and the profile of the student body. Haryana, the state where MRIU is located and from where the students are drawn, holds the dubious distinction of being in the lowest quintile of India states on Sex Ratio for the last three decades (1981–2011). Sex Ratio in the state is between 861–877 girls for 1000 boys against the national average of 901–931 for the same years. Although some progress was made at the turn of the millennium and the sex ratio climbed up from 861 in 2001 to 877 in 2011, the situation continues to be a cause for concern. The skewed sex ratio is seen as an indicator of severe gender inequality that manifests itself in many ways including high incidence of sexual and gender-based violence. Women and girls of Haryana, especially

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in rural areas, fare worse than men and boys on most human development indicators.

Educational statistics of Haryana mirror the gender disparity apparent in the sex ratio. The difference between the not-in-school\(^2\) percentage of boys and girls rises with the increase in age in rural Haryana. At all age levels, the withdrawal rate of girls from schools is higher than that of boys. When compared with other states of India, rural Haryana fares worse in terms of gender gap in enrolment for boys and girls in the 15–16 years age group. The gap is 4 percentage points for Haryana when the national average is 1.6 percentage points. Between 2006 and 2011, the percentage of girls (between the ages of 11 to 14 years) out of schools had marked a gradual fall—8.4 percent in 2006 to 2.1 percent in 2011. Since 2011, there has been a decline in enrolment and the percentage of not-in-school girls has increased to 3.3 per cent in 2014.\(^3\)

While the primary reason for undervaluing girls’ education and denying access to schools is rooted in cultural and religious beliefs and practices, schools and universities cannot be absolved of all responsibility. Iniquitous gender practices are performed at educational institutions through policies, pedagogies and curriculum and even through relationships between teachers and students. Often, this constitutes the hidden/informal learning that takes place in the educational context which ensures that dominant social norms and patterns remain unchallenged.

In the ‘modern’ progressive education system, higher educational institutions are expected to bring about a change in this reality. Academia is expected to play an important role in enabling students to critically reflect on social norms, challenge unjust social practices and policies that uphold the status quo, and create a vision for a more egalitarian social

\(^2\) Not-in-school rate is inclusive of dropout rate and those who had never enrolled.

order. This process requires self-reflection, both by the universities as institutions and by the individuals who constitute them.

Universities are also spaces where young citizens are prepared for their roles in the economy, polity and society. WISCOMP believes that it is critical that students at the university level acquire the ability to become lifelong learners. Such learning is the outcome of continuous interplay between social structures (contextual factors), culture and personal agency.⁴

Youth at the university level can enhance their sense of agency by recognizing that ‘even though some ways of ‘being’ become normalized, they are always shaped rather than pre-determined. As individuals they can make choices about what they prioritize in any situation and initiate change to current structures through their actions.⁵ Informed by this understanding of the possibility of ‘agentive’ movement, WISCOMP designed two workshop sessions for the students and faculty of MRIU. The key message of the workshop was that it is not enough to be able to identify and analyze gender inequality as an issue or problem; there is also a need to assess oneself in relation to the situation that prevails. It was hoped that such a self-assessment by the participants of the workshop will ignite concern for gender inequality at the personal, institutional and societal levels.

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Unpacking Gender Stereotypes: Workshop for Student

The student workshop enabled participants to critically reflect over some of the societal norms and practices which perpetuate gender stereotypes and become a hindrance to efforts for gender equity. Among the 40 participants, 36 were first-year students from the Masters in Business Administration Program and four were faculty members and administrative staff of the University. Fifty-five percent of the participants were females.

WISCOMP staff Manjri Sewak and Seema Kakran opened the workshop with icebreakers and reflection exercises to help students identify gender stereotypes. Students were asked to respond to the following statement: ‘Men are...but women are...’ The responses revealed some common stereotypes about women being adept at multitasking, sincere and more ‘manageable’ than men. On the other hand, men were seen as hard-working, practical, rude, among other things. Some personality traits were identified as being common to both men and women, such as being emotional and polite.

Building on these initial reactions, for the next exercise, participants were asked to sit in groups of six and reflect on
one of the following: ‘Traits of an ideal man’, ‘traits of an ideal woman’ and ‘traits of an ideal person’. They were also given magazines from which they could identify pictures or examples of the ideal man/woman/ person. The groups came up with the following personality traits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideal Woman Groups 5 &amp; 6</th>
<th>Ideal Man Groups 3 &amp; 4</th>
<th>Ideal Person Groups 1 &amp; 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polite</td>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>Progressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multitasker</td>
<td>Creative</td>
<td>Possessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
<td>Impressive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentle</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Smart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>Educated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reliant</td>
<td>Broadminded</td>
<td>Passionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gullible (kind)</td>
<td>Loving</td>
<td>Inspirational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: Aishwarya Rai</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Ambitious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>Etiquette</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Hardworking</td>
<td>Dedicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>True friend</td>
<td>Peaceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>Diplomatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
<td>Compassionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving</td>
<td>Manageable</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


During the discussion, participants reflected on the perpetuation of gender stereotypes, which often are not based on how men and women act or how they wish to act in their families and society. They talked about how images of the ideal man/woman are shaped by family, media, and peers. Many of the female students underscored the role of family in ensuring that gender divisions and responsibilities were not transgressed. Participants also had some disagreements about
the ideal traits. Many girls in the group contested the idea that “true friendship” could only develop between men. They also disagreed with the male students’ assertion that men can multitask and are polite. Some male participants accepted that the majority of women are able to handle responsibilities at work and home better than men. The discussion on these issues helped participants to acknowledge that gender roles are not static and as economy was evolving and women entered the formal workplace, gender roles were changing.

Advertisements that challenged traditional gender roles and identities were screened to encourage participants to think with an open mind about these issues. Some of the ads included were: Havells’ kitchen appliances, Raymond clothing and Prestige pressure cooker. These ads questioned gender stereotypes and accepted norms around women belonging to ‘the home’ and men to the ‘public’ sphere. The discussion, post the screening of the advertisements, with the participants nudged them to critically look at patriarchal norms and the power dynamics between men and women. Women participants were hesitant to discuss personal experiences of gender discrimination and in fact, the small number of participants who did speak up appreciated the support their families were providing to them. Only one male participant raised the issue of harassment of women in the
National Capital Region (NCR). This participant was from Nagaland, a North Eastern state of India where tribal culture accords a higher status to women of the community when compared with women in other Indian communities, especially in the North Indian states.

In view of the fact that MRIU is located in an area that is largely conservative in its outlook, the facilitators did not expect young women and men to openly discuss violence or discrimination within the family. However, when the problem of harassment was flagged, concurring nods could be observed from some corners of the room. This was an indication that gender sensitization workshops such as this one would need to be followed up with workshops where men and women could have separate safe spaces for discussion.

To gauge the participants’ understanding of the distinction between sex and gender, the facilitators projected a list of statements on the screen. The participants were asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement and whether the statement was related to the biological differences between women and men or gender differences between them. The statements included the following:

1. Women give birth to babies, men don’t.
2. Little girls are gentle, boys are tough.
3. In one case, when a child brought up as a girl learned that he was actually a boy, his school marks improved dramatically.
4. Amongst Indian agricultural workers, women are paid 40-60 per cent of the male wage.
5. Women can breastfeed babies, men can bottle-feed babies.
6. Most building-site workers in Britain are men.
8. Men’s voices break at puberty, Women’s do not.
9. In one study of 224 cultures, there were 5 in which men did all the cooking, and 36 in which women did all the house building.

10. According to UN statistics, women do 67 per cent of the world’s work, yet their earnings account for only 10 per cent of the world’s income.

11. Women do homework because men can’t.

12. Men are capable of managing affairs of the outside world, women are not.

The participants were able to separate the statements that were related to biological differences between women and men and those related to sociology of gender quite clearly. However, on statements 4, 6, 7, 9 and 10 which were related to gender role perceptions and gender discriminations, few participants displayed accurate information. There were three or four notable exceptions in the group who displayed understanding of how gender identity is reinforced socially and the strategies women and men use to negotiate around the expectations of the family and community.

The session on gender stereotypes and gender roles was followed by screening of the film “He Named Me Malala”.

Building on the awareness of the unprecedented power of films as well as the potential impact they can have in changing attitudes and actions, WISCOMP introduced the film to the participants. The facilitators explained that while some films have portrayed women in stereotypical roles and led to newer forms of violence against women, others have contributed to showcasing sense of empowerment, of breaking barriers, of resisting and speaking out against discrimination and violence. *He named me Malala* is one such film that presents a story of hope for the future; the potential and power to usher in a new framework within which women and men engage at individual and structural levels. “It is an intimate portrait of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai, who was targeted by the Taliban and severely wounded by a gunshot when returning home on her school bus in Pakistan’s Swat Valley. The then
15-year-old was singled out, along with her father, for advocating for girls’ education, and the attack on her sparked an outcry from supporters around the world. She miraculously survived and is now a leading campaigner for girls’ education globally as co-founder of the Malala Fund.”

“Acclaimed documentary filmmaker Davis Guggenheim shows us how Malala, her father Zia and her family are committed to fighting for education for all girls worldwide. The film gives us an inside glimpse into this extraordinary young girl’s life – from her close relationship with her father who inspired her love for education, to her impassioned speeches at the UN, to her everyday life with her parents and brothers.” Her story reveals how sometimes good can come out of not living up to expectations; how we can alter the way we look at the world and build inner courage and resolve.

The WISCOMP workshop used the film and instances from Malala Yousafzai’s experiences to raise some questions about gender equality, structural violence and how the youth can create a more equitable society. What conditions are required for such change?

Participants noted the important role played by Malala’s father in her life and the significance of men joining hands with women to create a more equitable society. Some female participants gave examples of male members from their own supportive families.
The facilitators also underscored how challenging entrenched patriarchal norms can be very difficult and requires both courage and perseverance. Although the film revolves around the life of a girl from Swat Valley the questions that it seeks to raise are not limited to that geographical area but resonate for other parts of South Asia as well.

Post the screening of the film the participants shared that they were deeply moved by the courage and conviction of Malala Yousufzai and that she was an exceptional orator and inspiring individual. Many also noted the important role played by Malala’s father in her life and the significance of men joining hands with women to create a more equitable society. Some female participants gave examples of male members from their own supportive families. One of the male participants acknowledged that since men are dominant in society, it was important to include them in the process of change, lest they see women’s rights as threats. The facilitators underlined that gender equality and breaking of patriarchal norms was also important for men as they were also under constant pressure and suffered due to them. It was important to recognize that gains from denting patriarchy would accrue to women as well as men.

At the end of the session, the participants were asked to state what they had learnt at the workshop. Majority of participants stated that they were inspired by Malala and her story of fearlessness, confidence and ability to speak up for her rights (82%). A much small number noted that they learned about gender inequality and its importance in society (15%). These immediate responses of the participants revealed the transformative potential that film as a medium offers. One of the participating faculty member observed that the film should remind everyone to not take education for granted. There is a need to recognize the value of opportunities that education offers and to make the most of these opportunities for oneself and for others.
Challenging Patriarchy and Hegemonic Masculinities: Workshop for University Faculty

The workshop session with the faculty members opened with welcome remarks by Prof. N.C. Wadhwa, Vice Chancellor, MRIU. He noted that the management and faculty of MRIU were deeply committed to the cause of gender equality and concerned about the status of women. While the Constitution of India states that men and women will be treated as equals and the governments are obliged to make progress on gender justice as part of the Directive Principles of State Policy, the fact was that women continued to experience social, political, and economic discrimination. MRIU recognizes the gap between what the Indian Constitution promises and what actually exists as ground reality in various parts of India, especially in the state of Haryana. He cited statistics to augment his views and observed that it was ironic that policies of reservation for women in local governance and several progressive legislations had been framed but the incidence of violence, discrimination and denial of rights of women continued on an unprecedented scale.

He further acknowledged that the problem was highly complex and was not limited to the Indian context only. Violence against women was a worldwide phenomenon and there was a need to bring about a change in the mindsets of people. Even the
so-called developed countries were grappling with the problem of violence against women, especially within the private sphere of the home.

One of the problems for those working on the issue was ‘the threat perception of men’. He observed that it was important for those working on women’s empowerment to sensitize men to the importance of gender equality in such a manner that they did not feel that women’s gain would become their loss. Unless this was accomplished the backlash against ‘women’s empowerment’ will continue.

Meenakshi Gopinath, Founder and Director, WISCOMP, facilitated the workshop session and shared that the interaction was a continuation of a the previous day’s dialogue with the students of MRIU where issues around gender equality were explored through group exercises, lecture and screening of the film, *He Named Me Malala*. She asked the participating faculty to be candid in expressing their views as openness and the true spirit of dialogue were vital to building a better understanding about the issue and also allaying any apprehensions that men harbored about women’s equal rights.

She started the interaction by painting two symbolic pictures of the world using poems written by Anasuya Sengupta\(^8\) and Maya Angelou\(^2\) : one where women were rendered powerless,

\begin{quote}
When a woman gives her love, 
as most women do, generously — 
it is accepted. 
When a woman shares her thoughts, 
as some women do, graciously — 
it is allowed. 
When a woman fights for power, 
as all women would like to, quietly or loudly, 
it is questioned.\(^8\)
\end{quote}

\(^8\) Excerpted from Anasuya Sengupta, “Silence”.

A gender sensitive University must see itself in several avatars. 
It should see itself as a space that is ruminative, aspirational, dialogic, inclusive, collaborative, democratic & creative... 

Meenakshi Gopinath
meek and denied dignity and the second where they enjoyed choice, freedom, dignity and where feminine power was celebrated. She asked the participants to imagine pathways to reach from the reality of today as described in her first picture to the beauty and balance of the second imagined picture. She observed that in order to reach the desired future of substantive equality it is important to displace existing hegemonic notions of masculinity and recognize the contribution women make to economy and society.

Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed.
I don't shout or jump about
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing,
It ought to make you proud.
I say,
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
the palm of my hand,
The need for my care.
'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally.
Phenomenal woman,
That's me.9

9 Maya Angelou, “Phenomenal Woman” from And Still I Rise. Copyright © 1978 by Maya Angelou

Through several questions she prodded the participants to reflect on gender stereotypes and explore why these beliefs continued to have a hold on the minds of people even when lived experience challenged their infallibility. Besides the fundamental difference between sex and gender, during the course of the discussion, Gopinath flagged multiple issues that feminist scholarship has identified as vital to the achievement of gender justice. Together with the participants she explored the following questions:

- Why is women’s care and home-work invisiblized and only men’s paid work valued by society?
A Discussion

Facilitator: Name any one thing that you do which is typical of your gender but which you don’t like to do?

Female Participant: Getting married at a particular age …by 25 years. I am from Kashmir.

Facilitator: How many men here would have thought of marrying a woman who was 32, provided she was the right woman?

Silence in the room.

Facilitator: Why do you prefer a 25 year old woman over a 32 year old woman?

Silence

Facilitator: Does everyone in the room agree that 25-26 years is the right age for a woman to get married?

Female Participant: I think the reason is that after 25-26 years, you become strong headed and you do not get molded into the family traditions. I think that is the reason that people prefer somewhere between 22-25 years; age when a girl is properly educated and not strong headed.

Another female participant: It is also related to the biological clock.

Another Male participant: A woman is more adaptable.

Facilitator: Adaptable to what?

A Male Participant: Male dominance.

Laughter in the room

Another Male participant: As everyone is thinking of the same age, as age increases, the number of choices for arranged marriage tends to decline.

Another male Participant: Earlier women were not contributors to the family income but over the last few years women have become important contributors to the family income by working outside the house. She marries late because she needs time to settle down. Women are also becoming career conscious. Earlier that was not the case. Career is considered important and marriage comes later on.

get married?

Many people shaking their heads.

Female Participant: At that time society was conditioned in that fashion and they used to think that marriage at that age is better.

Facilitator: We have already jumped a decade in less than a century.

Another Female participant: It is because our society is developing from being a traditional to modern society. It has nothing to do with age of marriage [being decided by society] it is the mindset that is changing.

The facilitator discussed the issue of early marriage as this is a serious concern in Haryana. According to UNICEF reports one third of world’s child brides are Indian. Child marriage is widespread across India, with nearly half of brides married as girls. While there has been a decline in the incidence of child marriage nationally (from 54 per cent in 1992-93 to 33 per cent today) and in nearly all states, the pace of change remains slow, especially for girls in the age group 15-18 years. See more at: http://unicef.in/Whatwedo/30/Child-Marriage#sthash.yd93GSRs.dpuf
Why and how is violence within the homes kept out of the purview of law?

How gender stereotypes are perpetuated by women as well as men?

What is the relationship of patriarchy with the individual, community and the state?

What makes patriarchy powerful and difficult to challenge?

She averred that the movement of any society from a culture of ‘Silence’ to recognizing the power of the ‘Phenomenal Woman’ is punctuated by several barriers which need crossing. Whereas progressive legislative changes constituted important leaps forward, equally important were the individual, everyday resistances and daily mutinies that women engaged in. The participants were encouraged to see the great opportunity they had in making the university an engendered space – cultivating abundance and extending ‘limits’ to ‘possibilities’ as they engaged everyday with young citizens, i.e. their students.

She then went on to establish the link between gender stereotyping, the objectification of women (through popular culture), and violence against women and discussed the expectations around women and men’s roles in the private and public spheres; and how patriarchy defines mindsets and behaviour among individuals and institutions (including education, health, economy, media, law, religion, culture and the political system). She also made references to the post-Nirbhaya³ phase in Indian civil society, polity and jurisprudence, wherein there was a decisive shift in the vocabulary from ‘victim’ to ‘survivor’ of violence.

The workshop highlighted two important mantras in challenging the patriarchal influences that are evoked in the slogans: ‘The Personal is Political’ and ‘Biology is not Destiny’. The teachers shared some personal vignettes of feeling ‘powerful’ and ‘powerless’ in the context of their own lived experiences. Invoking the film ‘He Named Me Malala’, examples of women who have challenged tradition, culture,
Individual personality characteristics are not gender specific. Environmental factors create certain characteristics. Depending on the personal attitude and personal outlook.

A participating faculty member

religion, family and their own mindsets were discussed and especially the experiences of participants on taking up atypical gender roles in “every day mutinies”. Some of the participating men shared that they took up home care work, women shared how they resisted marriage under pressure from their family and became path-breakers in conservative environs locked in oppressive traditions. Gopinath asserted that it was important to keep in perspective that an “en-gendered” world was not one where men and women were seen in opposition to one another; where people were divided into ‘good women and bad men’ but as a world where ‘men were sensitive to the exclusion that women confronted’.

A short video on the power of the ‘girl effect’ that can translate 50 million problems into 50 million solutions was screened. Gopinath averred that as educators, the participants need to recognize and seize ‘agency’; break the silence; and resist the narrative of impunity and violence.

The workshop reiterated the role of educators in creating global citizens in a context of pluralism, democratic practice and inclusivity. Bringing it all together, Gopinath flagged the concept of ‘Knowledge as liberation’ and one that would enable the educators to engender the educational environment with

An interview on educational rights of girls was broadcast live on a local FM channel. Seen here the workshop facilitator, Meenakshi Gopinath with the Interviewer.
self-discovery, expansiveness and a quest for mental and spiritual abundance.

At the conclusion of the workshop, educators seemed more open to their role in creating a classroom that was engendered and empowered. This was demonstrated by their request for future workshops that would build their understanding on the several issues that had been touched upon during the course of the session. They recognized their role as the ‘vehicles of change’—transmitting knowledge and empathy, creating equality, enabling sensitivity, and working with the intersectionalities that come into play when young people from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds enter the university campus.
Workshop Participants

All the participants at the youth workshop were first year Master’s students from the Manav Rachna International University, Faridabad, Haryana.

Aditi Kumar
Akash Yadav
Akshay
Akshay Arora
Amit Dhimar
Anjali Gupta
Ankit Lohia
Anupriya
Ayushi Manglo
Chayan Negi
Deepak Kumar
Harshit Biswas
Indu Chauhan
Jaichand Rai
Manisha
Neha Malik
Nisha Dagar
Nitin
Parul
Pooja Suhag
Pooja Yadav
Prateek Kumar
Preetika
Prince Kumar
Priya Yadav
Rahul
Ritu Garg

Rohit Daima
Rohit Kumar
Sandeep Tewatia
Shawn Mathew
Shelly Mundra
Shilpa
Suman
Urvashi Shukla
Vaishali Sharawat
The participants at the faculty workshop were drawn from diverse disciplines and their names are:

**University Management**

Dr. Chavi Sharma, Director, Faculty of Management Studies

Dr. N.C. Wadhwa, Vice Chancellor, MRIU

Dr. Neemo Dhar, Dean, Faculty of Management Studies

Dr. M.M. Kathuria, Trustee, Manav Rachna

**Faculty Members**

Amandeep Dhaliwal, FMS, Management

Dr. Anindita Chatterjee Rao, FMS, Management

Dr. Anil Sarin, Management

Bhavesh Joshi, FMS, Management

Dr. B. K. Singh, Civil Engg., FET

Dr. Dipali Bansal, Faculty, Engineering Department

Divya Gupta, FCBS, DBS

Gautum Negi, Management

Goldy Malhotra, Education

Dr. Deepti Dabas Hazarika, FMS

Dr. Farhat Mohsin, FMS

Jayant Sundaresan, FMS

K. M. Tripathi, FMS, Psychology

Kusum Mehta, FCBS

Manu Vijayan, MRIU-CW

Dr. M N Khusura, Physics MRIU

Nakul, Faculty, MRIU

Neema Shah, FMEH
Nupur Gosain, FMS, Psychology
Dr. Priyanka Singh, FMS, Management
Rashmi Rameshwari, FET, BT
Richa Sharma, FMEH
Dr. Saurabh Kumari, Journalism /Mass Comm
Sanjana Malhotra, ECE, MRU
Shahzadi Aggarwal, MRIS, CW
Sheema Farooqi, Journalism /Mass Comm.
Shilpa Arora, FMS, Management
Stuti Sahni, FMS, Management
Swati Sharma, Counselor, Manav Rachna Schools

In addition, to these faculty members the workshop was attended by teachers from the Manav Rachna Group of Schools.
 Profiles of Resource Persons

Meenakshi Gopinath is the Founder and Director of WISCOMP and has served as Principal, Lady Shri Ram College for over 26 years. In addition to her work on higher education, her research interests and publications focus on issues of security, peacebuilding, gender, Gandhian philosophy, Marxist politics, Buddhism and the performing arts. Dr. Gopinath has piloted and fostered confidence building measures through regular conflict transformation workshops and collaborative projects among intellectuals of the SAARC region and especially between Pakistani and Indian young influentials. An innovative program in Kashmir, which networks and trains women for dialogue and peacebuilding envisioned by her is today recognized as an innovative model for recovering women’s agency in areas of protracted conflict. Dr. Gopinath is a member of multi-track peace initiatives such as the longest sustaining Track II Neemrana Initiative, between India and Pakistan and the Pakistan India People’s Forum for Peace and Democracy. She was the first woman to serve on the National Security Advisory Board of India (2004 – 2006) where she sought to mainstream gender and human security concerns.

As part of her contribution to facilitate efforts to foster a culture of peace, Dr. Gopinath has written and lectured extensively on issues of Conflict Transformation, Peace building and Education for Peace in South Asia and internationally. She serves on the Governing Boards of research institutes, think tanks, NGOs and educational institutions. In pursuance of her commitment to develop programs for educating for peace, she is often called upon to develop curricula and courses of study in this growing and dynamic field. She remains an active participant in national and international civil society initiatives on fostering coexistence between communities, women’s engagement in building peace and sustained dialogue processes. Her work in the area of enhancing excellence and equity in education spans over three decades. In recognition of her contribution to the field of women’s education and empowerment, she has received several awards including: Padma Shri Award, Indira Priyadarshini Gandhi Award, Rajiv Gandhi Award for Excellence in Education, Mahila Shiromani Award Delhi, Citizen Forum Award,
Seema Kakran is Deputy Director, WISCOMP with over the 15 years of experience working with NGOs. At WISCOMP, she is responsible for the grass roots peace building initiatives in Kashmir, mentoring of research by Scholars of Peace and Interns in the areas of Conflict resolution, international law and non-traditional security. Prior to joining WISCOMP she taught Political Science and International Relations for six years at colleges at Delhi University including Miranda House and Hindu College, and at University of Nebraska –Lincoln. She holds Bachelors and Master’s degrees in Political Science from University of Delhi and an M.Phil degree in Political Science from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She also holds a Graduate Certificate in Public Policy Analysis from University of Nebraska –Lincoln, USA. As an awardee of the Human Rights and Human Diversity Initiative, University of Nebraska she conducted a Research study with the National Human Rights Commission (India) in 2005. She was also a recipient of the Junior Research Fellowship (1992) of the University Grants Commission, India.

Manjri Sewak is pursuing a PhD on Education for Peace at the Nelson Mandela Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. A writer and trainer in the field of peacebuilding, she holds expertise in conflict transformation and curriculum development. She is the author of *Multi-Track Diplomacy between India and Pakistan: A Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Security* and has published articles on peace education, civil society peacebuilding, and reconciliation. She is a recipient of the RCSS-NTI Research Award and the Fulbright Conflict Resolution Scholarship. As a member of the visiting faculty for the Conflict Transformation Diploma Program at Lady Shri Ram College, Manjri has led the foundation course on Conflict Analysis and Conflict Transformation as well as co-taught courses on Dialogue, Mediation, Gandhi, Justice, and Reconciliation. She holds a Masters’ degree in Conflict Transformation from the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University, Virginia, and a Bachelors’ degree in Journalism from Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi.