

World Organization of Students & Youth

International Conference

“The 21st Century Women’s Issues Shaping the World”

11th - 12th, January, 2019, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Event report

WOSY has organised an international conference with the theme “The 21st Century Women’s Issues Shaping the World”. The conference was organised keeping in view of the development that took place in 21st century concerned to women. Issues ranging from providing LPG cooking gas to rural women to women participatory role in global economic reforms were addressed. We have seen an impressive participation of young enthusiastic students from 53 countries. Details of delegates are as below:

Total no. of delegates: 487

No. of participating countries: 53

No. of boys: 290

No. of girls: 197

No. of international students: 315

No. of Indian students: 162

Participating Students/Youth organisations:

- a) Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, India
- b) Pragik Vidyarthi Parishad, Nepal
- c) Nepal Students Council, Nepal
- d) Rashtriya Janashakti Student Union, Nepal
- e) Federation of International Students Association, Bengaluru
- f) Federation of International Students Association, Pune
- g) Association of African Students in India

The conference was inaugurated by Prof. Ganeshi Lal ji, Hon’ble Governor of Odisha as the Chief Guest in the presence of Shri Sunil Ambekar ji, National Organising Secretary of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad as the Guest of Honour. Shri Sanjeev Ningombam, Secretary General of WOSY welcome the dignitaries and delegates to the conference and brief about the theme and objectives of the conference. Dr Rashmi Das, Chairperson, WOSY on her key note laid a launch pad of the conference highlighting the issues women are facing in the 21st Century and that are shaping the world as well as the aspirations for the conference. She said that we consider women’s issues the preeminent social agenda of our times, something which has to be acted upon by the entire society. Women’s issues are shaping government policy and they are shaping the world. Any society wishing to be fair and just must account for the way it treats women. Society has to be retrofitted to reflect truly the ability and aspirations of women. Shri Sunil Ambekar ji highlighted the major flagship initiatives of Indian Government that are designed and promoted for the upliftment of women in India. Ujjwala scheme of providing LPG gas connection to rural women, toilets constructed for hygiene and safeguarding integrity of women, providing Atal pension Yojana, extending maternity leave to 6 months which are all aligned to the Government’s motto of ‘Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas’.

His Excellency the Hon’ble Governor of Odisha Prof Ganeshi Lalji at his inaugural remark told us that daughters are not born they are a manifestation. He told us that every cell of our

body should speak one language and that should be the language of positivity. He said that inner evolution is more important than innovation. That there are no barriers when our heart is open and passports are only a means of differentiating people based on geography. There are no boundaries for humankind.

A wide range of experienced speakers and youth leaders graced us with their presence both on the dais and in face to face conversations.

The two days deliberation was divided into 4 plenary sessions, 3 parallel sessions and 1 paper presentations from delegates. The two days deliberations saw and enriching and engaging sessions with each session been delivered by experts who have work extensively at their domain.

Session details are:

Plenary Session 1: Women at workplace:

Speaker: Smt Hasina Kharbhil Founder of IMPULSE NGO Network and IMPULSE Social Enterprises.

In conversation with Lucy Guest Vice-Chairman WOSY and Dr Rashmi Das Chairperson WOSY. Smt Hasina shared her experience and challenges she as a woman faced during her journey in setting up a voluntary organisation. As a young girl from North Eastern part of India she had to answer many questions from family, society and to Government. After 20 years of struggle she has created a highly social impact NGO.

Parallel Sessions:

- 1) Indian Government for Women – Smt. Karuna Gopal President for Futuristic Cities and Smt. Neha Joshi, Social Auditor of Ujjwala Scheme, were in conversation with Dr. Chandrasekar Reddy. The session was a dialogue on how the present Government of India is transforming the ecosystem for women to live a dignified life.
- 2) Mothers, how to heal the World? – Smt. Madhuri Sahasrabudhe Founder, Mother on Wheels who crossed 23000 kms covering 22 countries in 60 days from India to the UK. Smt. Madhuri shared her experience on how she interacted with mothers and women of 22 countries. She says women all over the world play a predominant role in building a society.
- 3) Health & Psychology - Prof Meena Harihan, Professor University of Hyderabad, Dr Geeta Desai, Additional Professor of Psychology and Principal Investigator NIMHANS and Dr Anita Moral Author, Psychologist Assistant Professor BRA University Agra were in conversation with Shri. Akhilesh Rawat. The session was designed to address the serious concern women faces in terms of mental health, stress, depression and how that effects their personal and professional life.

Plenary Session 2: Role of Indian Women in India's leadership of the World.

Speakers: Prof R Vaidyanathan, Cho S Ramaswamy Chair Professor, Public Policy at Sastra University and Smt. Karuna Gopal President for Futuristic Cities

In conversation with Shri. Abhishek Tandon.

The session was an eye opening on how women have been playing a crucial role in strengthening economy from home to creating national assets. Smt. Karuna Gopal says

women are blessed with talents for multi-tasking as it is said that a woman can juggle balls and walk on a tight rope. In Indian culture women are referred as symbol of power (shakti) and that power is depicted as a triangle, one angle of the triangle signifies knowledge (Jnana), second angle signifies desire (icha) and the third angle signifies action ((kriya) and that can be concluded as a woman can exhibit her power by accumulating knowledge and having an intrinsic desire to bring it into action. Professor vividly explains with facts and statistics that women are the key to India's growth and had in fact been responsible for driving the growth in recent years. He says Indian economy is referred as feminine economy in contrast to American and European countries as the majority of the households in India are run by women who have a tendency to save money. If we observe Hindu mythology the name of male Gods begins with Goddess which signifies the place of women as equal partners.

The cultural program on Friday evenings was an unadulterated success with brilliant and thrilling performances both dancing and singing from international students from Afghanistan, Kenya, India, Uganda, Saudi Arabia, Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh in addition to the professional dance group Suryavansh.

Plenary Session 3: Men Leaders for Women Empowerment "HE for SHE".

Speakers: Shri K.A Badarinath, senior journalist from the Financial Chronicle

Shri Laxman G ABVP National Joint Organising Secretary, ABVP

In conversation with Smt. Sashimita Mohanty

This session was design to highlight what men can and should do for women empowerment. Both speakers with their own experience and contributions made towards women empowerment made an exhilarating remark on how it is important to have a conducive dialogue between men and women for understanding and support. Shri Laxman stressed the inherent qualities of women such as softness, selfless service and their qualities to change mindset of male. He also spoke about the initiative of ABVP of empowering girls through its initiative of "Mission Sahasi" by training self-defence to lakhs of girls across India. Shri K.A Badarinath spoke on how women in India has always been held with high esteem as compared to western countries. During his speech he made a pertinent point on the need to change the male's attitude and approach towards women. He stressed on the need of providing healthy and conducive environment for women at society and at workplace so that they can flourish. He highlighted the women friendly corporate culture established in Infosys by its founder Shri Narayan Murthy and her wife Smt. Sudha Murthy. Drawing inference from Hindu mythology he spoke about Ardhanarishwar a form of Lord Shiva where male (purusha) and female (prakruti) are worshipped as the symbol of balance between masculine and feminine. He also emphasised the need of giving equal opportunities and resource to girl child.

Plenary session 4: "Security & Sensitisation of Women"

Speaker: Roopa D Moudgil IPS, IGP, Karnataka

In conversation with Dr. Rashmi Das

The inspiring lady shared both about her professional and private life and how she had been transferred 42 times in 18 years. She stressed that when you stay on the right side of the law you will always win in the end and sometimes it required standing up in the court system for the right thing even it involves financial cost. She further says feminity plus masculinity is the art to keep strong in the male dominated workplace. She says during her service in police force, women were judge by how they behaved as compared to their male counterpart such as

showing feminine signs. Things are changing as women bring with them many things such as sympathy, empathy and emotional strength. Talking on society's hesitation on reporting to police on harassment she says many a times women develop irrational fear. She encouraged women to develop a spirit of adventure but with due responsibility. She also spoke on various initiatives of Government and Police department to address harassment on women. She credits her husband for being with her during tough times and supporting her to fight for the right with the mighty ones at power corridor.

After lunch we broke out into parallel sessions where approximately 30 students and youth leaders presented 8-10 minutes on various subjects such as

1. Women at the workplace
2. Politics of gender in transnational contexts
3. He for She
4. Rural-urban divide on approaches and aspirations of women
5. Security and Sensitisation
6. Gender sensitisation
7. 21st Century women
8. Women as leaders

The conference concluded with the Valedictory session. The Chief Guest was Ambassador Mrs

Banashri Bose Harrison of India to Sweden, Guest of Honour was Shri K N Raghunandan, National Joint Organising Secretary ABVP, also on stage were WOSY Chairperson, Dr Rashmi Das ji, Shri Sanjeev Ningombam, Secretary General of WOSY and Shri Ashish Chauhan, National General Secretary ABVP.

Shri Sanjeev presented the highlights of the conference and opined on how significant and impactful the conference is. Dr Rashmi Das ji left us with the overriding conclusion that EDUCATION IS THE GAME CHANGER and Girls has to rise and shine. Madam Ambassador who have served at 53 countries as foreign diplomat stressed the need of empowering women and understanding dreams and aspirations of a girl child. She says society can lead to a meaningful direction when women stands tall and at a right path. Shri Raghunandanji on his guest of honour address remarked the importance of women in Indian Society. He took examples of "Ema Keithel" familiarly known as "Mother's Market", an exclusive market meant and run by women of Manipur. This market is headed by PanchKanya i.e five women leaders. The unique market has more than 3000 women entrepreneurs with a history of nearly 500 years shouldering an important role in running families and society at large.

The new team (office bearers) of WOSY was announced by the Chairperson, Dr. Rashmi Das.

Shri. Mobarak proposed the vote of thanks where he checked with the audience whether everybody had been inspired and had understood what they had learnt over the last two days. On receiving confirmation that everybody had, he urged that it is now up to us to put it into practice and bring about the changes necessary with what we have learnt on these two days deliberations.