As part of its Media Advocacy efforts, the Laadli campaign of Population First instituted the Laadli Fellowships five years ago. They are given to young journalists who have been writing on gender issues in English, Hindi and Telugu. The fellowship of Rs. 50,000/- requires the fellow to write four stories over four months. This year the fellows were chosen from the winners of the current edition of the Laadli Media Awards - Ms. Shreya Ila Anasuya (independent writer, journalist and activist), Ms. Vinaya Deshpande (journalist with 10 yrs experience), Ms. Katta Kavitha (senior reporter at Nava Telangana) and Ms. Sindhuvasini (BBC Hindi).

Each of the journalists receiving the fellowship will write four investigative reports on the theme “Gender and Sexuality – Being LGBTQIA in India”. Following the Laadli Media Awards event, a workshop was arranged for the four fellows and winners of the awards, on 13th May, 2017 in FPAI premises.

Facilitators were Ms. Kamla Bhasin, Mr. Meet Tara Dnyaneshwar, Ms. Sonal Giani and Ms. Smriti Nevatia. Through various exercises and interactive sessions, the attendees dissected the concepts of patriarchy, women’s rights, gender identities and sexualities. 10 winners and fellows as well as PF staff attended this workshop, along with 3 freelance journalists. At the end of the workshop, the fellows stayed back for an exclusive session with Ms. Smriti Nevatia and Dr. A L Sharada to discuss the outlines of the articles they would be writing for the fellowship.
Change Makers in the making!

4th to 6th August, 2017
15th & 16th August 2017
HR College, Churchgate

Training Team
The members of the training team were Mr. Manjul Bhardwaj, an actor, director, writer, facilitator and founder of “Theatre of Relevance Foundation”, Dr. AL Sharada, Director Population First and Dr. Ishmeet Nagpal, Advocacy and Communication Manager from Population First.

Participants
The training-workshop was attended by 30 Students from HR College.

This 5 day workshop was aimed at training the Rotary Volunteers to be change makers and was done in collaboration with Rotary Club of Mumbai.

Mr. Manjul Bharadwaj started with exercises aimed at improving the concentration of the students and then went on to elaborate the concept of being a Change Maker with the help of word visualisation exercises. He presented the basic elements of being a Change Maker.

Dr. Ishmeet divided the participants into five groups and each group was told to analyse a problem they had highlighted in the word visualisation exercise - eg. dirty walls, damaged benches. The students were told to analyse the factors that led to these problems and find solutions to them. The groups needed to identify and discuss amongst themselves the issues to be raised, solutions and in the end give their action points. This activity was aimed at honing their problem solving skills. During the presentations, Mr. Bhardwaj pointed out the role played by body language in communicating with the audience. The audience’s body language mattered too as it reflected how interested they were in listening to the presentations.

A short video about homosexuality called "In a Heartbeat" and short animated videos on consent were shown along with group activities to clarify concepts like sexuality, gender bias, nature of consent etc. A discussion on challenges that the LGBTQ+ persons face, Section 377 and the language used in the law were very informative. The students had a lot of questions and they were given links to reading materials.

The participants were asked to write a letter to Mr. Manjul Bhardwaj on the 1st day of the workshop as feedback.

On the second day participants when asked to recapitulate about the previous day used words like Innovation, Happiness, Enjoy, Strong, Power, Hope, Strength, Nervous, Responsibility, Ummeed, Communicate, Effective, etc. to express their experience.
Tasks were given in which students had to convince others to bring about a change. This exercise was helpful in making participants understand that Change can be uncomfortable and is often understood wrongly.

Other activities were aimed at explaining that a change maker must Own the Change which he/she needs to bring about in society. Participants were asked to say one word which came to their mind first. The participants used words like are Emotion, Effect, Appeal, Unity, Belief, Determination, Understanding, etc. Again a task was given to explain to them that to be a change maker one needs to understand the problems and difficulties of the person whom we wish to change.

Students were divided into groups and asked to define who is a change maker and the quality & grade of a change maker.

Dr. A L Sharada conducted an hour long session on Gender Issues in which she covered “What is Gender & why it exists and “Intersectionality of Gender, (Caste, Religion, etc)”.

In an activity students were asked to list what they were not able to do because of their gender. They listed things like:
- Saying no to marriage
- Completing education
- Going out with friends late at night, etc.

When asked what they were forced to do because of their gender despite not wanting to, they listed:
- Cooking
- Household chores
- Attending social/religious functions, etc.

Students were divided into groups & sent to different floors to view objects through a gender lens. The groups observed lots of things in the college which they had never observed earlier.

The following observations were made by the students:
- A group picture of the professors showed that most of them were women. So this shows that the profession of teaching is taken by women.
- Then there was a list of the football team on the notice board of the college and there were only boys’ names.
- There was only one toilet for the girls while there were more toilets for the boys.
- In the gallery showing principals of the college there were less no.of women.

Activities such as the ones described above made the workshop interesting and participatory in nature.

Communication was one of the topics discussed. Mr. Bhardwaj talked about Communication which is divided into Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication. He explained that if we are listening to somebody, the words don’t register effectively in the brain but when we are watching a movie/video then the visuals of the movie are there in our mind. That means visuals are more effective than words.
In one more activity the participants were divided into 3 groups and each group was allotted a topic for role play. Each group had to conceive an appropriate skit representing their topic. All the members of the group had to participate in the role play and in the end one member from each group had to speak about the life skills portrayed in the play. It was indeed fun for all the participants as they got an opportunity to display their acting prowess!

Mr Bhardwaj closed the workshop by allocating a Group & Individual project.

Phase two of the workshop focussed on confidence building and leadership skills. The various activities enabled them to not only participate and shed their timidity in a large group but also helped them understand their own individual capacities to be trainers in the future. At the end of the last day the students gave positive feedback to the trainers and vowed to be true to the cause of change.

There was a perceptible change in their confidence levels and clarity in communication. Each and every student in the group had found his/ her own individual voice and was prepared for the journey as a change maker.

**Discussing Gender**  
8th Sept 2017, Mumbai

A panel discussion with advertising industry leaders was organised on gender inclusiveness and sensitivity in media and advertising at the 3rd edition of IAA Awards, held on 8th September 2017 at Astor Ballroom, St. Regis, Lower Parel, Mumbai. The panel discussion was insightful with the industry leaders discussing the issue of gender inclusiveness and debating whether the advertising, media and marketing industries have managed to break the glass ceiling when it comes to women members of the work force.

The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. Megha Tata, COO, BTVi and Vice-President, IAA India Chapter.  
The event opened with a presentation by Dr. A.L. Sharada, Director, Population First, on the findings of the research study. The panellists included Ms. Anuja Gulati, State Programme Coordinator, UNFPA India; Ms. Shalini Kamath, Independent Director, Ms. Meenakshi Menon, Managing Partner, Spatial Access; Mr. Rohit Suri, Head, Talent and HR, GroupM and Mr. Sudhanshu Vats, Group CEO, Viacom18 Media Pvt Ltd.

Ms. Nandini Dias, CEO, Loadstar UM, introduced the event by saying that even though women make up half of the world’s population, their contribution to economic activity and growth is far below their potential. She proceeded to give some statistics about the representation of women in various sectors such as Law, Indian administrative services and the media industry.

Dr. A. L. Sharada, Director, Population First, shared some facts and figures from a recent research done by them on the issue of gender inclusiveness and sensitivity, conducted in
collaboration with K C College, covering 36 media organisations, broadcast channels and newspapers.

Dr. A. L. Sharada highlighted some troubling observations like how the marginalised and oppressed segments of society like the third gender and the backward classes are not adequately represented and how there was no uniform policy with regards to maternity and paternity leave. She also threw light on how despite laws being in place, workplace harassment is still something women have to go through.

The address by Dr A.L. Sharada was followed by the panel discussion. Ms. Megha Tata, who was moderating the session, started the panel discussion by asking Mr. Sudhanshu Vats whether he had seen any dramatic shift in gender inclusivity and Viacom’s contribution to that effect. While Mr. Vats of Viacom18 agreed that there has been a definite change in the situation, he also accepted that the pace of the shift could have been faster.

“As far as Viacom 18 is considered, we, as an organisation are committed to this cause. At the entry level we have 44 per cent women. At the top level we are at 27 per cent. We are moving the needle and I agree that we need to move it faster but we don’t want it to be about men and women but about capability,” he said.

He elaborated how Viacom18 has a zero tolerance policy against sexual harassment and how they provide a crèche service too.

While he spoke about how they provide nine months maternity leave and a work-from-home option to make the transition much smoother for new mothers, Ms. Menon was of the opinion that maternity leave breeds resentment among men.

“I think the six-month maternity leave is the worst thing that could have happened to women in the Indian context. Six months maternity leave means that a woman is not productive in that organisation for half a year. I think it pushes back women, particularly in smaller organisations. I think there should be equality. If you are giving your women six months of maternity leave maybe you should give men at least half of that time as paternity leave,” said Ms. Menon of Spatial Access.

She was also of the view that the reason behind the low number of women in the top management level is because women at the top don’t mentor women junior to them.

Speaking about a few trends that she has seen emerging, Ms. Shalini Kamat said, “The first thing that I noticed is that the pace is there, the change is happening but it is slow. A recent study says that at the rate things are going it will take 100 years if there is to be gender parity across the globe. The second trend I am seeing is with people opting to have only two children and with many having two daughters, I am seeing that such men are taking the cause of women now. The third trend I am seeing is not very positive. Women who reach a certain level are not able to transcend from that level because after fighting the system for such a long period of time, they lose the teeth to fight more.”

She also spoke about a most disturbing trend where it is seen that millennial men do not want their partners to work but rather stay at home and involve themselves in child-rearing. Rohit Suri of Group M spoke about how it was difficult to find talent at the entry level. He attributed this to the education system and how there weren’t enough female candidates. Ms. Anuja Gulati of
UNFPA India threw light on the problems women face at the grassroots level and how it is different and far more complicated than what women face in other parts of the world.

The session concluded with all parties agreeing that while change is happening, it is not happening fast enough.

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**Reporting Gender**

*Press Club*

*1st & 2nd Nov, 2017*

Population First conducted a two day workshop at the Press Club of India, Mumbai on November 1 and 2, 2017. This workshop was supported by UNFPA and was conducted in collaboration with Press Club, Mumbai and “Pratigya Campaign for Safe Abortion”. The workshop was an in-depth sensitization on gender related issues for media professionals.

The focus of the workshop was how to cover issues related to gender in a more informed and nuanced manner. Mr Kumar Ketkar, President of Mumbai Press Club, who was the chief guest, inaugurated the workshop and Ms. Kalpana Sharma delivered the keynote address on Gender Sensitive Reporting. The sessions in the workshop covered a wide range of topics including an experiential initiation into the concepts of Gender, Sex, Patriarchy and several deeply informative sessions on Gender based violence, Sexual harassment at workplace, Prenatal Sex Determination, Sex selection, Safe abortion, Reporting on sex selection and safe abortion as well as Reporting on gender based violence.

The resource persons for the workshop comprised Ms Kalpana Sharma (Independent journalist and consulting editor with Economic and Political Weekly), Dr A.L. Sharada (Director of Population First), Ms Anuja Gulati (State Program Officer for Maharashtra, United Nations Population Fund), Ms Ujwala Kadrekar (Leading legal advocate against sexual harassment, sex selection and domestic violence), Ms Padma Deosthali (Independent researcher for various gender issues and ex-head, CEHAT), Ms Sameera Khan (Independent journalist, researcher and former Assistant Editor, The Times of India), Mr Anand Pawar (Executive Director, SAMYAK - Pune based NGO) and Dr. Nozer Sheriar (Deputy Secretary General of FOGSI and leading Obstetrician and gynecologist at Breach Candy, Hinduja, Holy Family, Masina and other hospitals in Mumbai) and Dr. Shamala Dhupte from FPAI.

The content of the sessions was not just restricted to presentations and talks but also participatory activities and group discussions. The information based sessions were rounded off on day one by a “Theatre of Relevance” workshop by Mr Manjul Bhardwaj and day two ended with a panel discussion presided over by Mr. Dharmendra Jore (Political editor at Mid-day and Secretary of the Press Club, Mumbai). The other panelists were Anuja Gulati and Sameera Khan.

The feedback from the journalists was as follows:
Rahul Gaikwad - “One thing I shall certainly do. I shall never do anything that might create problems for or hurt my women colleagues.”

Minati Singha – “I will now explore the gender perspective in every story that I cover and after attending the workshop I think my approach and perspective to a story will certainly be wider.”

Tripti Shukla – “This workshop clarified some misconceptions related to the medical examination following a rape case and I got an idea about the do's and don'ts of media coverage of a case of sexual harassment or rape.”

One very significant and touching feedback was that of Chandrakant, the technician manning the sound system at the press club. After listening to some of the sessions he said that, “I have realized that my wife has a major role to play in my well being as well as the nurturing of our little infant and that she too must be overworked and tired at the end of the day. I pledge that from now onwards I will be sensitive towards her and not shout at her on reaching home however tired I am and will try to help her.”

~ News and Views ~

Will Special Police Stations be able to save the girl child?

(Ujjwala Mhatre)

Recently an article in a Hindi daily announced that the Yogi government in Uttar Pradesh has made an important decision to save the girl child. It has decided to launch a different sort of police station in Lucknow, its capital city. This outpost will be launched to implement the PCPNDT Act and will work in coordination with the Women’s Welfare Department and Health Department. The Secretary for Health and Family Welfare has been appointed as the Appropriate Authority under whose direction a PCPNDT cell will be formed. The cell will comprise of the Director, Women’s Welfare, Additional S.S.P. and officers of the Department of Family Welfare. This special police station will function on the instructions of the PCPNDT cell and both departments will release a notification regarding this in the near future.
Apparently the Chief Minister, supposedly worried about the falling sex ratio, has given the prime responsibility of improving this ratio to the women’s welfare department. The Home Department will issue an order for the establishment of an exclusive police station on the recommendation of the Women’s Welfare Department. Once formed this police station will have powers to conduct raids throughout the State and the Chief Minister thinks that this will help curb the practice of “female foeticide” (which should more appropriately be called pre-birth sex determination) and bring to book ultrasound centres and nursing homes indulging in this malpractice.

A reward of Rs. 2 lakh is also announced for persons giving information helping to catch the culprits involved in illegal sex determination and sex selective abortions.

The problem with such measures is that they put sex determination and abortion in the same basket and declare both illegal, thus misinforming the people at large. It is important to note that our law makers were very clear about the purpose of the two laws – PCPNDT is to stop pre-birth Sex determination by using pre-natal diagnostic techniques and MTP act is to provide safe abortion services to women. Accordingly the PCPNDT act focuses on regulating and stopping the misuse of pre-natal diagnostic techniques alone and does not say anything about regulating the abortion services. This is absolutely essential in a country where women need abortion services to deal with unwanted and unsafe pregnancies.

What is more problematic is the over simplification of the problem of falling sex ratios that threatens to upset the gender balance of society. Coming from government it is shocking, to say the least. Let us look at the problem from a different angle.

First and foremost there is no provision in the PCPNDT Act for a police case. Any misuse is investigated by the appropriate authority and a case is filed in a magistrate’s court,

Secondly, abortion is not illegal and nor is it a destruction of life as it is made out to be by using words like “foeticide” or ‘bhroonhatya’ (which literally means killing of the foetus). The foetus upto 12 or 20 weeks (the limit for legal abortion) is not really a life. Besides there are many valid reasons why a woman might want to end her pregnancy and abort the foetus which include rape, life threatening pregnancies, failure of contraception and inability to rear a child or any sort of mental or physical trauma caused by it. The MTP Act, 1971 legalized abortion in India and though a large section of the populace is still unaware of it. Not only is it legal, it is a woman’s right to resort to abortion under the prescribed conditions and is an integral part of her reproductive rights.

However, campaigns like the one about to be launched in U.P. confuse sex determination with abortion and threaten to deprive women of their basic right to safe abortion. The lack of awareness about the legislation regarding abortion and also the stigma attached to it leads women hiding pregnancies and then resort to backstreet abortions putting their lives in danger. Around 8% of maternal deaths are attributed to unsafe abortions in India.

More importantly, sex selection is not simple enough to be curbed by punishing a few people and monitoring a few clinics. It is a reflection of the deep rooted problem of son preference in a patriarchal society. In a society which does not treat women and men equally and where women are treated as second grade citizens, everybody wants to have a son who they think will support them in their old age and carry forward their name. Daughters are also seen as a burden as parents have to pay a hefty dowry. The patri-local marriage practices also make families see investments in daughters as having no returns as a girl gets married and lives with her in-laws. They are seen as a bad investment.

In Uttar Pradesh which is one of the most socio-economically backward states, these patriarchal attitudes are even more entrenched. The health and education indicators for women are very low. It
is also important to note that the sex ratios start falling as the fertility rates decrease as couples who are opting for smaller families also opt for a boy in the family because of patriarchal mindsets. Between 2005-6 and 2015-16 the fertility rate of UP has fallen from 3.8 to 2.7 which indicates the impact of two-child norm as well as the rising aspirations of the emerging middle class in the society.

While one cannot question the importance of addressing issues related to implementation of the PCPNDT act to stop misuse of technology, it is equally important that we do not compromise or neglect other issues related to a girl/woman’s opportunities for survival, growth, development, participation and protection. Issues related to safety, security and empowerment of women should be the prime focus of the government. Also a total upheaval of social attitudes towards girls and women is what is urgently required to improve the quality of life for them and provide them with a safe and secure environment to pursue education and a fulfilling career. Women should not be hampered from making choices about their own lives. They should not be told what to do at every stage of their lives by government agencies and vigilante groups. Is the government that is used to quick heal populist schemes ready for the long haul of social change?

**ME TOO CAMPAIGN**

(Venu Gawali)

On October 15, 2017 in light of Hollywood media moghul, Harvey Weinstein case, actress Alyssa Milano tweeted: “If you have been sexually harassed or assaulted write ‘me too’ as a reply to this tweet.”

Over the past weeks, social media platforms, around the world trended with the hashtag #MeToo. The campaign gathered over 12 million posts and reactions on Face book in the first 24 hours and was tweeted about nearly 1.6 million times within a span of a week.

The #Metoo campaign has drawn attention to sexual harassment as an everyday occurrence for women bringing to light, friends and family being victims one way or another. The collective nature of the confessions allowed many to draw courage to speak up, made it more personal, allowing them to let – go of the feeling of shame and guilt - a step closer to dignity.

It has very openly helped to debunk the myth that sexual harassment is a law and order problem and has anything to do with the action or attire of the victim, contrary to popular belief.

This campaign has snowballed the importance of such uncomfortable conversations about gender in society with the view of introspection and the larger “what needs to be learnt and unlearnt vis a vis gender roles and stereotypes.”

Even if we manage to stop normalizing what is okay and what is not, in terms of harassment and encourage girls to speak up without fear of being victimized, through this campaign (breaking the vicious circle) we would have taken a step in the right direction.

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Through the Gender Lens

In Amlani college, Vile Parle (W) and B.M.Ruia College, Gamdevi workshops on gender were held on the 23rd & 24th of September and 28th and 29th of September respectively. Doosra Chashma, a film festival was also held at Amlani College. The workshops consisted of sessions on Sex, Gender and Patriarchy, Gender based violence, Gender spectrum, Safe abortion and Sex Selection and were conducted by Dr. Sharada, Ujjwala Mhatre, Dr. Ishmeet Nagpal and Dr. Shamala Dhupte from FPAI.

As 28th September was “Safe Abortion Day” the students of B.M.Ruia college were asked to make posters on Safe abortion as an activity. The best 3 posters were rewarded and some of the good posters were exhibited on the college notice board.

A similar workshop was held at LJNJ College, Vile Parle (E) on the 5th and 6th of October. The students thoroughly enjoyed the activities and short films shown. They were asked to do skits on topics like sexual harassment, myths related to menstruation, sex selection and gender stereotypes. The students were also asked to write about what positive change they would make in their lives towards Gender Equality.

Contact Us:
Population First, Ratan Manzil,Ground Flr, 64 Wodehouse Road, Colaba, Mumbai 400 005
Tel: 91 9167902776
Email: info@populationfirst.org
Website: www.populationfirst.org
Follow us: Twitter: https://twitter.com/Laadli_PF,
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/LaadliPF