

Population First

VOLUME 3: MAY 2022

TANA BANA

Newsletter of Population First

From the editor's desk

Some things give you immense pleasure in crafting them. Volume3 of Tana Bana is one such project.

A deep dive with Professor Vibhuti Patel into the factors impacting the workforce participation of women, and the steps to augment it are produced as excerpts. We encourage you to read the full interview on our blog.

Revisiting one of my favorite writers, Rabindranath Tagore was a satisfying and intellectually expansive journey from exploration to fruition. Some from his rich repertoire of avant-garde women with an unmatched depth of character are captured in Tagore and His women.

Cinema has evolved over the years in taking the conversations on sex and sexuality forward. Swathi Chaganty explores the world of cinema, to present a tongue-in-cheek view of these discourses about the birds and the bees.

This month, we announced the 15 Laadli Media Fellows for 2022, held a workshop to explore just how sensitive is South Indian Media when it comes to gender portrayal, and a seminar to mark the International Nurses Day which explored in-depth how media was depicting the backbone of our healthcare, and released a report of gender analysis of media. Read on to know more, enjoy!

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Gender atwork



Interview of the Month:

Gender At Work- Perspectives, Nuances, and Gaps

May 1 is marked as the International Workers Day, globally. This year's theme "Act together to build a positive safety and health culture", notes the importance of a cohesive action to address the vagaries of the COVID-19 pandemic. For this edition of our newsletter, we bring a conversation with Dr. Vibhuti Patel, the well-known gender economist, and women's rights activist. She has been actively involved with the women's rights movement since the early 1970s. She has been a contributor to the 'The Report of the Working Group on Discrimination Against Women and Girls (2020)' brought out by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). She delves deep into what are the existing trends of female labor participation in India. Read the excerpts from the interview.

All the views expressed here are the views of Dr. Vibhuti Patel, and should not be attributed to Population First.

Q. How would you define the work participation of women in the labor force, its importance, and the various aspects when one studies it?

A. As per the United Nations, Women constitute ½ of the world's population, and 2/3 of the world's workforce but get 1/10th of the world's income and 1% of the World's Wealth.

Women all around the world have been doing paid, underpaid, and largely unpaid work in homes, factories, fields, forests, and mines. Over and above 3 Cs-cooking, cleaning, and caring, a large number of women do activities

such as a collection of fuel, fodder, and water, animal care, kitchen gardening, and raising poultry that augments family resources; these goods would have to be purchased from the market otherwise. The unpaid care economy plays a pivotal role in the economic growth of the nation in the developing as well as industrially advanced nations.

For the framing of development policies, national-level statistics is the principal data input, but this is largely impaired by the undercounting of women, both as workers and those available for work. The first barrier is the definition of work vis-à-vis women's work. We continue to relate work only to remunerative aspects of work as work. The census concept of 'work' overemphasize production for the market and although it does include some non-market production for own consumption such as cultivation where men are also involved, it excludes by a strange logic other types of production for own consumption such as livestock maintenance (done mostly by women).

The lack of freedom of choice, power and material resources, and traditional gender roles, and norms, stand – in the way of women's development. Intersectional vulnerabilities of caste, class, race, ethnicity, religion, geographical location and gender keep a large majority of women in a precarious economic status as they are at the rock bottom. Hence all efforts to reduce poverty are inseparable from the action agenda of gender equity and gender equality based on intersectional justice. Equal opportunities for women and men to own land and assets, earn money, and participate in working life, are essential for sustainable development in the long run.

Interview of the Month:

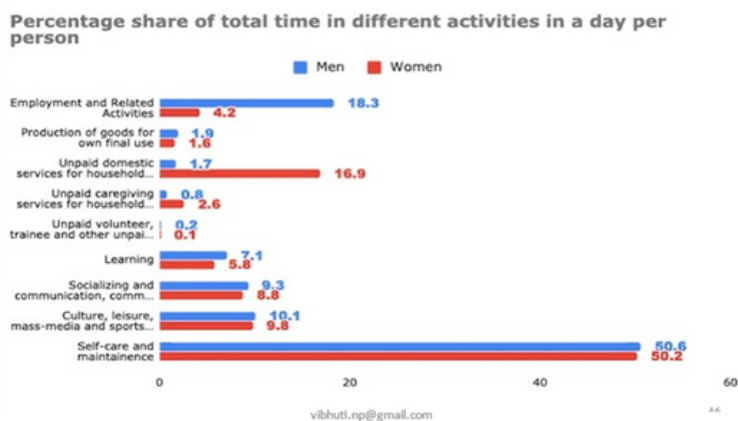
Q. Recent studies of long-term trends by NSS suggest that female labor force participation rates in India have been hovering around the 20% mark for the past several years. Moreover, there is a gap in the rural and urban population's involvement. What could be the reason despite various governmental policies?

A. There are multiple reasons for the low work participation of women. Research by various women's studies experts has shown the following reasons:

Triple Burden

Most working women continue to face the triple burden of job, child care, and housework with very little support, either from their partners or the government. Even though women have entered the workplace in huge numbers, their new economic and social responsibilities are often forgotten where family life is concerned.

Paid and Unpaid Work of Women & Men: Time Use Survey, 2019: Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation- Indian women spend 299 mins in a day doing unpaid work, men spend 99 mins



Source: Paid and Unpaid Work of Women & Men: Time Use Survey, 2019: Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, Government of India, 2020

Sexual Harassment

Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (WICCI) Council of Ethics released a survey-based report, The Annual Review on the State of Sexual Harassment in India, in March 2022, which found that 50 percent and 55 percent of respondents respectively had experienced "physical contact or advances" or inappropriate touching, including pinching, patting, rubbing, or purposefully brushing up against another person" at least once at the

workplace. Of the people who faced sexual harassment at the workplace, 55.2 percent decided not to file a complaint.

Public debates on sexual harassment while traveling from home to the workplace has also brought to the fore the major issue of safe transport for women. Without a safe travel facility, it becomes very difficult to take employment that involves long-distance travel.

Wage Gap

It is often considered that if women move into male-dominated occupations in larger numbers, the wage gap will close. However, there appears to be a gender-related wage gap in virtually every occupational category. Gender segregation directly influences work behavior in the form of wage differentials.

Q. A study by IIM-A released earlier this year suggests that the income gap increases as women rise in their careers in India. How does one explain this trend?

A. Several studies show, that women are more often overqualified for their job than men. Other studies show that women have less influence over their work organization and content than men. The structures in a work organization are often seen as gender-neutral, independent of whether the organization's members are women or men. However, one has to question how gender affects the processes and structures of the organizations. Different forms of organization have different gender-political effects.

A comparison between hierarchy and network organizations shows that a hierarchical organization limits people's exposure to new challenges. On the other hand, a network organization offers considerable, in principle limitless, challenges. Hierarchical organizations are likely to make women invisible as bearers of knowledge and isolate them, often at the bottom of the hierarchy. Network organizations become more female-friendly, largely by virtue of their flexibility. Network organizations are more amenable to change, make women visible as working individuals, and allow all employees to take on greater challenges.

Interview of the Month:

Gender at work

**The family picture is on HIS desk.
Ah, a solid, responsible family man.
The family picture is on HER desk.
Umm, her family will come before her career.**

**HIS desk is cluttered.
He's obviously a hard worker and a busy man.
HER desk is cluttered.
She's obviously a disorganized scatterbrain.**

**HE is talking with his co-workers.
He must be discussing the latest deal.
SHE is talking with her co-workers.
She must be gossiping.**

**HE's not at his desk.
He must be at a meeting.
SHE's not at her desk.
She must be in the ladies' room.**

**HE's having lunch with the boss.
He's on his way up.
SHE's having lunch with the boss.
They must be having an affair.**

**The boss criticized HIM.
He'll improve his performance.
The boss criticized HER.
She'll be very upset.**

**HE got an unfair deal.
Did he get angry?
SHE got an unfair deal.
Did she cry?**

**HE's getting married.
He'll get more settled.
SHE's getting married.
She'll get pregnant and leave.**

**HE's having a baby.
He'll need a raise.
SHE's having a baby.
She'll cost the company money in maternity benefits.**

Click here to read the [full interview](#)

Spotlight

Crafting stories from a Gendered Lens- Meet Laadli Media Fellows 2022

Congratulations to our 15 Fellows

Earlier in May, we announced the finalists of The Laadli Media Fellowships 2022. The themes for this year's writings are Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Gender and disability, Reporting on the LGBTQI+ community, and Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) of women and adolescent girls.

The initiative is supported by UNFPA India and The Royal Norwegian Embassy In New Delhi.



Media and Gender - A quarterly review

True to our vision of making Indian media more gender-sensitive, we recently launched another initiative- the quarterly review of the media from a particular region to analyze stories from a gender perspective. For the inaugural edition of the exercise, three leading English-language print dailies (Mumbai editions) were studied in detail over three months (Jan, Feb, March 2022) to select the five best gender-related news stories. Sameera Khan, the well-known journalist, went through nearly 270 newspapers from three publishing houses – The Times of India, Indian Express, and Hindustan Times. She examined in detail pages 1 to the last page (excluding the opinion pages) to identify the winning stories.

Noted Sameera Khan, “the task to choose the best gender-related stories turned out to be not that easy – not because there were too many gender-related news stories to choose from but because there were too few gender-related stories in these leading dailies.”

“It was no surprise to find that the bulk of gender-related stories involving women, trans people, and those of other marginalized genders was on crimes against them, usually sexual assault, murder, and quite a few on cyber-crimes as well including the Bulli bai deals issue. There were also reported stories where women were identified as the perpetrators of crimes. That it is the women who are mostly covered by mainstream media in the crime genre has been the trend for quite some time now,” she elaborated.

The winning stories and their writers are:

1. Rupsa Chakraborty for 2 of her stories - ['Metros show gender gap in vaccination...'](#), [IE Mumbai, Jan 20, 2022](#)

And

[At M-East, maternal health takes a beating'](#), [IE Mumbai, Jan 24, 2022](#)

2. Sourav Roy Burman - ['Steady Uptick in Muslim girls going to schools, colleges'](#), [IE Mumbai, Feb 13, 2022](#)

3. Ketaki Desai - 'Meet the Women helping other women claim space in politics ', [TOI Mumbai, March 13, 2022](#)

4. Rahul Singh - ['No pension for a year for several women officers'](#), [HT Mumbai, Feb 16, 2022.](#)

This news report led to the army finally being pushed to pay the women officers after a delay of a year despite the Supreme Court order 2 yrs ago. [This story on Feb 18, 2022 reports on the impact of the story, 'Women army officers to get pension'](#)

5. Joydeep Thakur - ['Spectre of child marriages, trafficking looms large in Sunderbans'](#), [HT Mumbai, Jan 18, 2022](#) (part of a 5 part series on how marginalized populations have been further marginalized in school education due to pandemic and lockdowns)

The Parameters that made these stories stand out from the rest are:

- Use of multiple sources and inclusion of several women's voices and quoting the right gender specialists
- Good and reliable gender-related data
- A gender-justice perspective
- Throw light on gender in a subject area where gender is often not highlighted enough



Reel World

Of the Birds and Bees, and the Indian cinema

By Swathi Chaganty,
Programme Manager, Population First

So, when was the first time that you were exposed to a conversation around birds and bees? 10, 12, or 13, or still older? Do you recall the person who spoke to you about some 'hard-hitting' yet basic facts of life?

Some of us were, ahem, lucky, we were initiated as early as 8th standard by our teachers who were progressive enough to have a session with us before it reached our parents and they decided that our morals were being compromised! Those stifled giggles of the students were privy to the discomfort of the adults delivering the 'young ones' a lecture on nature and its way; with a little grasp of the importance of such a conversation. It was comical coming to the students who had long ago thrown Enid Blytons, Nancy Drew, Hardy Boys, and their ilk out of their reading lists and who were from the land of Vatsayan.

It stays the same to date!

Our films are no different and reflect this lack of conversation on sex and sexuality for as long as one can remember. Our love for metaphors as a nation, and delicate suggestions bordering on circumventing the issues considered a taboo have resulted in our entertainment industry resorting to oft-repeated and hackneyed canoodling flowers, bees hovering over flowers, or the protagonists breaking into song and dance, inevitably in fields or in exotic locations with pecking birds adding to the flavor.

Yes, some might say it is a tasteful and artistic representation of sex, romance, and love, as opposed to the bed-breaking action shown in some modern productions. Regardless of our shyness, there have been a few bold attempts to break this pattern of thought and content over the last decade. Satirical sketches by India's foremost comedy groups like East India Comedy (EIC) and All India Bakchod (AIB) gave the necessary nudge in that direction. EIC's satirical sketch called [Sex Education in India](#) back in 2014, and while [AIB's Man's Best Friend](#) and [Woman's Besties](#) back in 2016-17, might not be everyone's cup of tea, they attempted to normalize conversations around sex and sexual health. The [Period Song](#) by Girliyapa did something similar for menstruation with its bold and peppy representation.

Our mainstream cinema also reflects this shift. It has been extremely refreshing and also endearing to see the conversation of birds and bees between parents and children on the big screen. When Atul Srivastav, in *Stree* says, *yeh joh jawani hai bohot vichitra samay hota hai. Shareer mein urja ka bhandar chupa hota hai... Aur yeh joh shareer hai usko kuch samajh nahi aata kya kare kya naa kare. Issi tadpan mein opposite sex ke saath friendship karleta hai kabhie kabhie*, we know we are in for a fun conversation. A similar banter between Sugandha played by Bhumi Padnekar and her mother played by Seema Pawha, in *Shubh Mangal Saavadhan* where the latter says, *yeh joh aurat ka shareer hota woh rahasya ka khazaana hota hai, band gufa mein hota hai... aur yeh kab khulta hai pata hai?* To which Sugandha answers back frustrated but much to our chuckles *jab koi khulja sim sim bolta hai, mummy*.



Reel World

Of the Birds and Bees, and the Indian cinema

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While these scenes are fun, wholesome, and tastefully done in representing the discomfort of parents in having the conversation with their children what is more important is, that they have normalized having these conversations. These scenes commendably reflect the fact that these conversations are happening with characters in their early twenties, and that the youth themselves are pushing their parents out of their comfort zone; be it Rajkumar Rao pushing his father's buttons when he feigns innocence and asks: *swamsevak matlab?* Or be in Bhumi Pedhnekar who calls out her mother and says *sex toh bolna aata nahi hai* when Seema Pawha calls her conversation as *life-long education*. This is not just reflective of the conservative milieu we live in, but also points to a perplexed adult population unable to grasp the changing attitudes of youth who are exposed to a plethora of information about sex and sexuality.

But, if we are to study the changing content, we can safely say that thankfully we are on a path to challenging the status quo through innovative and bold story-telling. Do check out a short web series – [Sex Chat with Pappu & Papa](#) by YFilms – the digital arm of YRF studio. It pushes the boundaries as it navigates the complex conversation about sex and sexuality in a light-hearted, yet informative manner. This series may prove to be a good starting point for parents to introduce this crucial yet not-an-easy subject to their children.

So, which is your favorite film, serial, story, or scene that you believe has not shied away from the birds & bees and kissing flowers conversation? Do let us know.

And oh yes! How did you broach the subject with your children? Do share your experience with us, who knows someone somewhere may draw inspiration while grappling with their own dilemma!

Write to newsletter.popfirst@gmail.com

Tagore's Women

By Ritu Motial,
Program Director, Laadli

*'Let me light my lamp', says the star, "And never debate if it will help to remove the darkness'-
Rabindranath Tagore*

Remembering Gurudev on his birth anniversary.

Rabindranath Tagore was born into a zamindar family from Bengal which was at the forefront of the Bengal renaissance. He was privy to some of the most modern and radical literary works, and thoughts prevalent in the intellectual circles. His own family encouraged women to undergo formal education and become self-expressed.

Tagore's female protagonists too were strong, confident, bold, and revolutionary in their outlook. These women may have been drawn from a motley of steeped-in-conservatism-backgrounds from the elite as well as the hoi polloi, but they nonetheless present an opportunity to explore freedom from outdated norms, even in today's context. *Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit*, reverberates in his writing evocatively as he explores various facets of human, particularly feminine emotions.

For Tagore, women had to explore various facets of their own identity- wife, mother, daughter, petulant lover, and more. His women traverse the journey from being oppressed to emancipated conquering the social rejection, blossoming into confident people who decide the course of their own life, even if it meant returning to a traditional existence.

While his early writings explored the social injustices that women were subjected to, be it widow ostracization, marginalizing and stigmatizing lower castes and communities, and more, they were always shown as strong personalities through a series of motifs like mythological deities. Tagore was urging women to no longer be passive and to don a progressive mantle that allowed them their

rightful place in society. His subsequent writings presented a montage of urban women who were breaking the traditional norms and stepping out into their own, exploring their sexuality, alongside establishing their identities as activists for human rights who spoke against societal ills like untouchability, the caste system, and religious practices.

Chokher Bali, perhaps one of the earliest feminist writings in the modern Indian context, explores the life of young Binodini who was widowed within six months of her marriage. Erudite, savvy, and beautiful, she was soon sought by Mahen who was now married to Ashalata. The story traverses her journey of exploration of her desires, love, and subsequent dilemma of leaving the tag of a widow and getting married. While one may argue that Tagore did stay on the safe road by not letting Binodini remarry, the strength of her character is such that one cannot question her choices whether it is to travel with Mahen, seek Bihari, her true love, or go to Benaras to look after her aunt, leaving Bihari alone after admitting her love for him.

Mrinmoyee from Samapti questions the norm that a wife is a possession and has to do what her husband requires of her, including acquiescing to his conjugal desires. She is a carefree village dweller till city-educated Amulya returns and falls in love and chooses to marry the bubbly teenager, much against Mrinmoyee's wishes. She refuses to give in to his demands and questions the absence of choice she has. Tagore points to the lack of agency women had over their lives and bodies as Mrinmoyee asks Amulya, *you like me and I am supposed to follow all the rules? Did anyone try to find out what I want?* The husband chooses to give her space, respecting her viewpoint, and she eventually finds her true partner in Amulya.

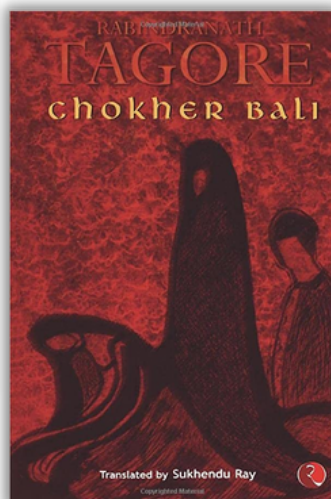
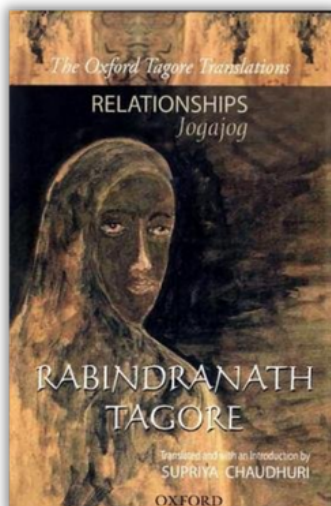
In Jogajog, Kummu is a young shy girl who follows all norms and rules laid down by the family she is married into. Her husband a nouveau-riche Bengali elite is an obnoxious person who subjects her to marital rape. Tagore has questioned many aspects of man-woman relationships including the lonely existence of a

Tagore's Women

By Ritu Motial,
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wife and her search for joy outside of her marriage as Charulata in *Nastranirh* or Bimala in *Gharey Bairey*. His women are educated, bold, and ready to challenge the status quo. Not one to be covered down, they will reject marriage to follow their life's goal as Kalyani of *Aparichita* or will use rejection by their spouse to make a name and position of their own as in *Giribala* of *Maanbhanjan*, or will reject their domineering husband and his family as Mrinal in *A Wife's Letter*.

Tagore's women are not "abala naris" who are at the periphery of society. He lays great stress on these women being educated or never giving up on their desire to study. "If education is a tool for human development and if education is the birth-right of a human being, I do not understand how we can deprive women of education," he notes. None of them are deified as an epitome of virtuous womanhood but exhibit many layers, some even grey or dark to be the bold and strong characters that break existing norms, stereotypes, and the patriarchy. Even though at times it may appear that he does not let them step beyond a certain point as in the case of Kammu of *Jogajog*, who eventually returns to her abusive husband; one cannot but admire Tagore for his bold vision and his endeavor to provide them equal status.



Celebrating our Nurses

Nurses have almost always been at the forefront of providing medical care the world over and have ushered in revolutionary ideas to change the way care is given. Yet they remain invisible, unrecognized, and unacknowledged. In our recently held workshop "**Let's Celebrate Our Nurses, The Unsung Heroes Of The Pandemic**" to mark the International Nursing Day, an accomplished group of specialists deliberated about the biases, stereotyping, and prejudices that the nurses face at every level, including media, the doctors, and hospital staff. The workshop was supported by UNFPA and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in New Delhi.

In his keynote address, our Guest of Honor, **Sriram Haridass, Deputy Representative, UNFPA India** noted the tremendous contribution of nurses to looking after people and urged everyone to ensure that these invisible heroes are treated with respect. "About 80% of nurses are women. In spite of this, we find very few women, especially nurses being involved in decision-making roles. We need to see more women health professionals being involved especially when it comes to deciding their roles, responsibilities, and tasks within the health system. I am a strong believer that by continuing to empower nurses and making them more active participants in decision-making processes, India will be able to build a resilient national health system that can overcome any crisis and challenges it may face in the future," he remarked.

Dhruv Somani, a film historian, and aficionado looked at the way Indian cinema has portrayed nurses through the years and just how close to reality it truly was. He recalled the caring nurse from *Anand*, played by Lalita Pawar, the dedication of Waheeda Rahman in *Khamoshi* as she nurses a Rajesh Khanna back to normalcy from his mental health condition, and the stoic and compassionate Aishwarya Rai in *Guzaarish*. How does the Indian Film Industry view nurses, and how sensitive and close to reality is their

Happenings

portrayal? He noted that not only did Indian cinema gender-stereotyped the depiction of nurses, but it also caricatured the male nurses, if at all they were shown. It was time that more male nurses were included and in a manner that did justice to them.

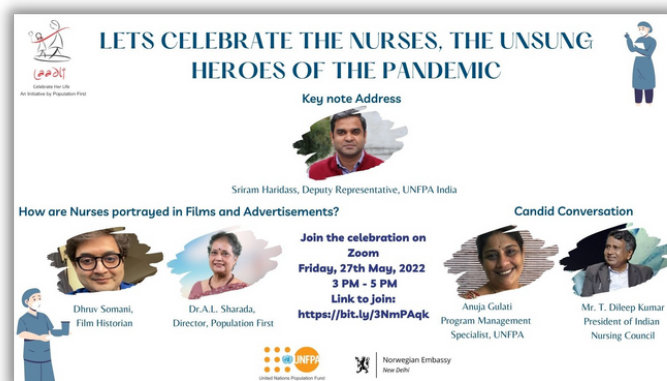
Dr. A.L. Sharada, Director, Population First presented an insightful view of the way nurses have been depicted in various advertisements. She shared a series of advertisements involving nurses and their roles. She remarked, “while the Pandemic may have wrought havoc at many levels, it has however made us realize the importance of various groups of people in our lives, and this included our nurses. The advertising industry is not behind in showing its appreciation and acknowledging their contribution.”

“However, the role of nurses is depicted in the advertisements as an extension of their role as sisters and mothers. The contribution of a mother's or sister's service is often seen as a labor of love. Maybe it is this perception and orientation of nurses towards work that stops them from taking leadership roles and moving up in the hierarchy. It is not seen as a career, a profession but as a service,” she noted.

For the final session, **Anuja Gulati, Program Specialist, UNFPA, India**, engaged in a conversation with our Guest of Honor for the day, **Dr. T Dileep Kumar, the President of the Indian Nursing Council**, as they discussed the portrayal of nurses in the media, as well as why was it crucial for the media to spotlight nurses more in their work while refraining from stereotyping them.

Opening the conversation, **Anuja Gulati** observed, that the media, especially the films portrayed the nurses in stereotypical ways- nurturers, caregivers but not clinicians. She also noted that they faced social stigma, discrimination, lacked access to supplies during the pandemic, and it was about time that they were accorded the respect due to them. Speaking of Florence Nightingale's contribution to infection control, **Dr.T. Dileep Kumar** highlighted the pivotal roles nurses play in the entire care continuum, and in every aspect of the hospital functioning and management. He emphasized the need for films to portray them in leadership roles and show them more involved in the decision-making process, not just at the periphery.

Dr. T. Dileep Kumar also noted the three critical areas that needed urgent attention- Investment into nurses' skills up-gradation, creation of more nursing jobs, provision of more leadership roles, and stronger policies to strengthen them. He noted that the pandemic has shown the importance of the nursing staff and hoped that with the advent of OTT platforms more films will be dedicated to the appropriate representation of the nurses and not just as caricatured or deified versions.



***Congratulations for a unique celebration, I have been to several programs on the occasion, but this one is very different -
Dr. T. Dileep Kumar***

Gender-Sensitive Reporting In Regional Media

On May 26th, as a part of our Laadli Media Advocacy Initiatives, **“Gender Sensitive Reporting in Regional Media”**, an online workshop for the media from the five southern states was organized. Laadli Media Advocacy Initiative has been working closely with media across the country to strengthen and build the capacity of journalists and create a trained pool that can develop gender-sensitive and inclusive reports on a variety of subjects. The effort is in recognition of the lack of a vigorous and dedicated curriculum in most media and journalism schools and is aimed at mainstreaming gender discourse in the media and eventually a larger population. This workshop is being supported by UNFPA and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in New Delhi.

Our Guest of Honor, Sriram Haridass, Deputy Representative, UNFPA India in his keynote address spoke to the attendees about the importance of producing gender-nuanced content which represented diverse voices from amongst the community. *“While the cinema industry has started portraying women in more dominant roles, they continue to show them as sex objects. In a country that still grappled with gender-biased sex selection, to have films glorifying boys can be a challenge,”* he noted.

Dr. AL. Sharada spoke about various Laadli Media Initiatives including LMMAGS and the effort that has gone into engaging with various media organizations, industry bodies, and journalists to sensitize them to gender and patriarchy. *“We have always aimed to explore diverse topics through a gender lens and identify ways to make a more gender-just society. The journalists play a key role as change-makers. When they write about issues like this, it helps us as social impact organizations to focus on those that require urgent addressing. It also helps the policymakers in shaping programs and interventions required,”* she said while inviting the media to join various initiatives launched under her leadership.

C. Vanaja an award-winning journalist, TV presenter, filmmaker, and the first Telugu journalist to get the prestigious Ramnath Goenka took the attendees through what comprises a well-crafted gender-sensitive and inclusive portrayal. as she highlighted what makes for well-nuanced stories on various subjects, explained how to analyze subject matters from a gender perspective with examples, and enunciated the dos and don'ts. She spoke of the famous Disha case, which missed critical aspects of the story by not looking at various facets through a gender lens. For instance, the story of the 13-year-old wife of a person killed in the encounter without being given a fair trial was drowned in the praise of the police officer in charge. She also noted that just not the gender perspective is missing in most stories but even the number of women in the newsrooms is abysmal leading to skewed reportage.

The next session was moderated by Dr. A.L.Sharada, as she navigated a power-packed panel discussion that looked at the challenges and opportunities in reporting on issues from a gender perspective in the region. The panelists were unanimous in their observation that the regional media has a long way to go indeed, and perhaps more such workshops would be very beneficial.

“The regional media has seen more women since 80, the media has been writing on women, but not necessarily from the gender lens which highlights the differential impact on women,” said Loganayaki Ramachandran an award-winning writer, journalist, editor, and social worker while talking about the rampant invisibilization of the women in Tamil media.

Shahina KK, an award-winning journalist working as the Associate Editor of the news portal 'The Federal' noted that the Malayalam media does not hesitate from shaming women who bring to the fore any kind of sexual harassment. She cited a recent example of a young actor who flagged an inappropriate behavior meted out to her, “the media instead of questioning the senior actor who subjected her to such behavior was not questioned, instead, snippets of her life were

Gender-Sensitive Reporting In Regional Media

released as juicy gossip. This showed the patriarchal mindset of the journalists and the social media consumers.” She also pointed toward the mushrooming of journalists who have not gone through the rigor of proper training, resulting in poor quality of journalism.

Kondaveeti Satyavati, an active champion of women’s rights, and the founder of two feminist magazines ‘Lohitha’ and ‘Streevada Patrika’ – Bhumika alluded to the effect corporatization of the media has had on the quality of media persons as well as the stories. She felt that not only did the stories lack depth but the space for highlighting issues of women, children, LGBTQAI, and Dalit communities is shrinking. She also pointed out that more men and fewer women were being hired. However, social media has provided independent journalists a space to bring critical topics to the fore, she noted.

CG Manjula, the former Associate Editor for PRAJAVANI, a leading Kannada daily, and an acclaimed journalist while acknowledging the lack of talent in regional media and the continuous capacity-building initiatives, noted that the journalists do win fellowships, grants, and awards. “The media has the responsibility to sensitively report on various subjects, especially those pertaining to sexual harassment, and crimes against women. Most journalists come with cultural prejudices against women. This is one of the reasons why they indulge in victim-shaming.”

Roopa Vani Koneru, a journalist, scriptwriter, documentary filmmaker, and short story writer, too highlighted the effect of the profit-driven nature of the industry which focuses on sensationalism and has reduced space for critical issues as well as women as reporters. “Corporate media houses circumvent government dictate of employing 30% women by inducting them largely into housekeeping and other support roles. Hence the male domination continues,” she said

You may view the workshop [here](#)

Gender Sensitive Reporting in Regional Media

Key note address - Sriram Haridas, Deputy Representative, UNFPA India

Laadli Media Advocacy initiatives - Dr. A. L. Sharada, Population First

How to write gender sensitive stories: C. Vanaja, TV presenter and Film Maker

Panel Discussion
Reporting on gender issues in South Indian regional media

Roopa Vani Koneru - AIM Tv Telegu
C G Manjula - Independent journalist
Shahina KK - The Federal
Loganayaki - Editor and Social Worker
Kondaveeti Satyavati - Bhumika Women’s Collective

Thursday, 26th May, 2022
3 PM - 5 PM
Link to join: <https://bit.ly/3lzoK2e>

Norwegian Embassy New Delhi

Logos: Laadli (Celebrate Her Life, An Initiative by Population First), UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), Norwegian Embassy New Delhi.

Population First



Laadli

Celebrate Her Life

An Initiative by Population First

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