

A two-day workshop on Capacity Building of Journalism Students on Gender-Sensitive Reporting at Jaipur (10th & 11th August 2023)

DAY-1

A "Gender-Sensitive Reporting" workshop was held on August 10th-11th, 2023, at Vesta International in Jaipur. The primary objective of this event is to enhance the awareness and skills of a group of around 35 journalism students concerning gender-related matters, gender-based discrimination, and violence. The workshop aimed to equip participants with the ability to report through the lenses of gender and human rights. Population First partnered with HJU, UNFPA Rajasthan, CECOEDECON and Lok Samvad Sansthan, along with experts in gender and media, to organise this workshop.



The inaugural session began with a welcoming note that outlined the workshop's objectives. This was followed by remarks from Dr. Anil Kumar Mishra, an Assistant Professor, Academic Coordinator, Dean of the Faculty of Mass Communication, and Head of the Department of Development Communication. The event also formally launched the project, overseen by Dr Deepesh Gupta, State Head of UNFPA

Rajasthan, and Prof. (Dr.) Sudhi Rajiv, Vice Chancellor of Haridev Joshi University of Journalism and Mass Communication in Jaipur. The project 'Gender Sensitive Reportage' was being outlined, and mentors/faculty members were being introduced, with Mr Kalyan Kothari, Secretary of Lok Samvaad Sansthan, being among them.

The first session of the day was by Dr. A. L Sharada, CEO of Population First. She gave us an overview of gender, gender norms, and roles. The session delved into gender concepts, functions, and patriarchy, commencing with an icebreaker session where participants shared gender-related experiences. They actively defined and differentiated sex and gender, with responses noted collectively. Identifying gender stereotypes across contexts like textbooks and media was another activity. Dr. A. L Sharada's presentation enriched understanding, while discussions unveiled how patriarchy shapes power dynamics. Interactive tasks prompted the exploration of gender differentiation in qualities, roles, and responsibilities. Introducing LGBTQI+ identities broadened perspectives. The workshop spotlighted patriarchy as oppressive power relations, considering its intersection with class, caste, and disability. A "Power Walk" exercise illustrated power

imbalances. The session nurtured a nuanced gender comprehension, helped challenge stereotypes and heightened awareness of patriarchy's societal impact.



Ms Shobhita Rajagopal, a retired professor from IDS, led the next session, focusing on comprehending gender-based discrimination and violence. The outline of her discussion covered various vital aspects of this critical issue of understanding Gender-Based Discrimination and Violence.

The discussion covered various essential aspects of this subject, shedding light on its prevalence, impact, and responses. GBV is a grave violation of human rights that poses a significant threat to individuals, with women and girls being particularly vulnerable. This form of violence encompasses physical, sexual, mental, and economic harm, including intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child marriage, and 'honour crimes.' Its roots are intertwined with historical gender-based power imbalances, often perpetuated by patriarchal structures.

The session highlighted the rise in reported crimes against women, including cruelty, assault, kidnapping, and rape. Government responses to these issues involve the implementation of policies, the establishment of women's police station helplines, and the provision of legal aid. Notable initiatives like the Nirbhaya Fund and One Stop Centres have been introduced to address these challenges. However, limitations in terms of resources, personnel, and gender sensitisation continue to hinder effective responses.

The role of the women's movement in India was discussed extensively, emphasising its role in driving conversations around violence against women. Landmark cases, such as the Mathura Rape case and protests against dowry-related violence, have led to legal amendments over the past decades. Various laws, including the Dowry Prevention Act, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDV Act), and the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act, have been enacted to address different facets of GBV.

A vital aspect highlighted was the intersectionality of GBV with factors such as caste, religion, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. These intersections amplify vulnerabilities, making individuals more susceptible to discrimination and violence. The concept of using a gender lens was underscored due to the extensive and lasting impacts of GBV on survivors' mental and physical well-being. Overcoming the prevailing culture of silence and biases related to domestic violence requires collective efforts and a heightened sense of sensitivity.

Ms. Shobhita Rajagopal's session highlighted the urgent need for understanding and addressing Gender-Based Discrimination and Violence. The complexity of this issue demands comprehensive strategies and collaborative endeavours to create a society free from the shackles of discrimination and violence. The subsequent session, led by Mr.

Govind Chaturvedi and Prof. Himanshu Vyas, encompassed an extensive exploration of reporting techniques. The primary focus was on news photo stories and short films, where participants gained insights into various aspects of reporting, including skills and presentation techniques.

Ms. Shalini Agarwal delved into the pivotal role of social media in addressing gender-sensitive subjects. Her discussion highlighted the platform's potential to amplify the discourse on such topics, making them more accessible to a broader audience. Mr. Mukesh Mathur addressed language's crucial role in shaping reporting narratives. He provided valuable guidance on language usage, emphasising its impact on effectively conveying the nuances of gender-sensitive reporting.

The session concluded on an interactive note with an open-house question-and-answer segment. This provided attendees with the opportunity for deeper engagement, allowing them to seek clarifications, share thoughts, and further enrich their understanding of the discussed concepts.

DAY-2

During the workshop's second day, Ms. Trisha, a UNFPA Rajasthan Youth and Gender Specialist, led a session on the Human Rights-Based Approach to Reporting. This aimed to equip emerging journalists with a practical understanding of human rights principles in journalism.

Human rights, derived from universal moral and legal principles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are inherent to all. Post-World War II, the UN Charter was established, leading to the Universal Declaration of 1948. Core treaties like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guide these principles. Ms. Trisha emphasised that understanding human rights is vital for individuals and journalists, given the media's role in shaping opinions and accountability. Effective reporting involves clear explanations of human rights, emphasising education.

She talked about how reporters should consider marginalised groups using data for a comprehensive perspective. Sensitivity to power dynamics, safety, and comfort is also crucial during interviews. She discussed how a human rights approach amplifies marginalised voices for participation and empowerment. Ms. Trisha's session empowered participants to integrate human rights into reporting effectively. With these skills, budding journalists can raise awareness, foster accountability, and promote justice and equality.

Dr. A. L Sharada, CEO of Population First, led another session for the second day, where she discussed the media's portrayal of social norms and led sessions on gender-sensitive reporting, including language use for sensitive topics like sex selection, gender-based violence, and child marriage. Dr. Sharada highlighted social issues like rape, gender bias, stereotypes, and biases. For reporting on rape, Dr. Sharada stressed the media's influence on public understanding of sexual assault. The guidelines included careful word choice, active voice, sensitivity, protecting survivors' identities, and avoiding victim-blaming. She underscored responsible image use and the legal consequences of revealing identities.



Dr Sharada also tackled gender-biased sex selection. She emphasised balanced representation to address gender violence and dispel myths. She advocated for unbiased language. Participants engaged in group activities explored gender-sensitive reporting, and made presentations. UNFPA Consultant Ms Antara contributed to this with insights and support.

In the concluding phase of the workshop, Mr Kalyan Kothari, Secretary of Lok Samvaad Sansthan, provided a comprehensive outlook on the way forward. Drawing upon the insights and discussions throughout the seminar, he underscored the imperative role of gender-sensitive reportage in addressing societal disparities and promoting inclusive narratives. Mr. Kothari emphasised the need for continued collaboration among participants, mentors, and organisations represented at the workshop. This collaborative effort, he affirmed, is crucial in amplifying awareness, challenging stereotypes, and fostering nuanced comprehension of gender issues in media. As participants depart with enhanced skills and perspectives, they are poised to actively contribute to more equitable and responsible journalism that empowers and informs.

