

AustralAsian Centre for Human Rights and Health Inc



ACHRH

Empowering Communities
through Knowledge & Research

Hope Workshops

Lucknow & Melbourne

February 2020
Newsletter

ACHRH in Lucknow India identifies strong cultural continuity between India and Australia

The city is rapidly modernising. New buildings, new esplanade by Gomti river and new attitudes to gender equality all augur well for the city of Lucknow. A strong push to teach gender equality and women's empowerment to Postgraduate students is government policy.

The MBP Government College of Lucknow invited us to hold gender equality and women empowerment workshops with the students. A/Professor Shweta Mishra and Principal Professor Manju Dixit hosted me. I addressed the 500 strong student assembly. The students of the National Cadet Core of the College lined the entrance and I walked along with two VIPs – Asstt Director of Police Anju Gupta and Professor Nishi Pandey, Head of Lucknow University English Department.



All were impressive in their strong attitude against patriarchy and domestic violence and encouraged students to learn from the Australian work.

HOPE workshops resources prepared with the help of Australian-Indian community struck a chord with the students.

The lesson I learnt - that cultural continuity between India and Australia is very strong. The resources prepared by ACHRH with the help of Australian-Indian and the broader South Asian communities have international value. Please read more below.

On another note an ugly form of patriarchy was on display when we visited the Sheroes Café near the River Gomti. It was a lesson in courage and resilience of Indian women in face of severe violence. Please read more below



HOPE WORKSHOPS IN LUCKNOW, INDIA

Dr O'Connor

Happy homes, Prevention of Family Violence Education

HOPE Workshops builds on ACHRH previous video resource "United We Stand" (also funded by Vic Government Gender Equality grants). The video uses culturally congruent strength-based community focused approach. It helps to create a cultural change by appealing to hearts and minds in line with the aims of primary prevention program as outlined by 'Our Watch' (2015, 2016) and 4th National Plan (2019). The workshops bring awareness of cultural expression of patriarchy and gender inequality associated with it. The workshops help create interactive discussions shift attitudes towards greater gender equality, enhancement of shared decision making and what hidden dowry demands look like.

The workshops were held on 9 and 10 January 2020 with 37 students. The students were highly interactive. They watched 3 video clips of family life showing patriarchal decision making in a happy family, the power of money when a woman earns more than her husband, and how dowry is demanded by NRI husbands of Australia when they go back to India to get married.

It was freezing cold but that did not deter the students from attending. They were highly motivated and engaged with the issue. We conducted pre and post workshop surveys. The students strongly identified and connected with all three video scenarios and found them as relevant to their life in Lucknow and India, as they are for the Indian society of Australia.

Here are some examples of students' feedback

"The workshops were very helpful in understanding relationships"

"Taking initiative starting from our own family, changing the mind set and that will make a chain of change".

"These workshops should be held in every street, every locality, Debates should be organised and men's beliefs about dominance should be challenged" (Male student)



Professor Manju Dixit Principal and A/Prof Shweta Mishra

The students understood that family violence is 1) about controlling another person's choices. And putting fear into their minds. 2) That family violence is caused by lack of equality between genders 3) that society patriarchal attitudes make it hard for women to leave violent relationships. 4) That men want to be seen to be the head of the household, but they do not need to be, and still be seen as valuable.

I really loved conducting the workshops with students at MBP Government PG College I also enjoyed the freezing cold, fogged out Lucknow, its Gomti River and beautiful food. Thanks to A/Prof Shweta Mishra and her colleague's Dr Sarita and Dr Sanover.

The workshops received enormous press coverage, some of which can be seen below.

HOPE Workshop celebrates International Women's Day

Train the Trainer Workshops build community capacity around enhanced gender equality and prevention of family violence

Sunday February 23, 10am to 1:30 pm

Drill Hall, Multicultural Hub (26 Therry St, Melbourne CBD)

RSVP Gauri Kapoor - gaurikapoor@optusnet.com.au or info@achrh.org

Hope Workshops in Melbourne

Gauri Kapoor

ACHRH recently organised training workshops in Australia and in India with the objective of equipping volunteers with knowledge, tools and techniques needed to run 'Hope' Prevention of Family Violence workshops in their networks. The 'Hope' workshop model designed by ACHRH combines video analysis, presentations, group activities and discussion in addressing what is arguably one of the most important public health issues today. It aims to build on momentum created by earlier projects - Natak Vihar and United We Stand. Sessions in Melbourne saw the participation of 20 individuals consisting of mostly young people of South Asian backgrounds. All are emerging community leaders actively committed to promoting progressive social change. Amongst the diverse group were many health care professionals including doctors, psychologists and social workers. Everyone present enthusiastically participated in a dry run of the 'Hope' workshop which each will go on to facilitate independently in 2020.

These structured training workshops were led by Dr Manjula O'Connor (psychiatrist), Anu Krishnan (social worker) and Uthra Ramachandran (barrister). Each contributed their perspectives on how to facilitate an awareness raising workshop and guided participants through key pieces of information that should be included in them. This meant going through important definitions and terms as well as becoming familiar with the various forms of abuse that exist.



Valuable and much needed insights into the legal system were also offered. The dynamics of power and control was a central theme that underlined presentations. All concepts and topics were explained in a way that allowed for trainees to develop a highly nuanced understanding.

A 'Hope' workbook was distributed. It is quite broad in the aspects it covers as a resource / tool and draws upon culturally resonant references as well as different sources of data and research. The material is presented in a really simple and clear format which anyone can easily comprehend and relate to regardless of what their level of knowledge or education is. Along with accompanying videos, the workbook helped shape great talking points during the workshop and built a framework to look at influences which exist in the context of family violence. From the seemingly small power imbalances that form in a household or in a relationship to omnipresent community and societal mores we live with.

Throughout the workshops, participants were required to think critically about the social construction of gender norms and cultural norms and how they can eventually become environmental risk factors for family violence. Particular emphasis was placed on examining the gender socialisation of children and the learning of social expectations as this is a key starting point in understanding the root causes of inequality. Also emphasised was identifying different manifestations of gender discrimination and its impact. Time had to often be allocated to Q & A's as trainees were always very keen to ask questions of

the presenters' and to exchange opinions with them on the subject of gender.

Participants were able to reflect on topics during group activities. There was great openness and eagerness to engage in discussion and to share personal experiences both within small groups as well within the group as a whole. This is notable given many participants did not even know each other. Conversations began by focusing on marriage and the division of labour in households. Later, conversation flowed on to exploring the nature of conflict in relationships and rigid expectations of behaviour in South Asian families. It was interesting to hear of quirky anecdotes, a range of views about communication in relationships, and peoples' varying perceptions of family life and how community influences it. The powerful technique of role play was used as well by Dr O'Connor to stimulate discussion in depth about important issues such as bystander intervention and considering what power imbalances may be at play in certain situations.

This latest initiative is an important continuation of the work ACHRH has been doing to advance

attitudinal change. The 'Hope' Workshop creates a forum for constructive discussions about a range of important issues and it promotes the learning and sharing of knowledge and experiences. As a participant, I felt the workshop was highly engaging and highly interactive. It helped to fill several knowledge gaps I had. I left the workshop with a much clearer idea of what social determinants exist in relation to family violence. Along with my fellow trainees, I look forward to spreading the message of 'Hope'.

(The HOPE Project is funded by Victorian Government 2019-2020)



A Brief Report of the Two-Day International Workshop: Hope

Dr Shweta Mishra, Assistant Professor, Department of English, MBP Govt. P.G. College, Aashiyana, Lucknow

A two-day International Workshop: Hope was organized on 9th and 10th of January, 2020 at Maharaja Bijli Pasi Govt. P.G. College, Aashiyana, Lucknow, in collaboration with the Australasian Center for Human Rights and Health, Australia (ACHRH). The workshop titled "Empowering Young Women: Early Intervention and Prevention of Family Violence" aimed to focus on "mutual cultural respect", "empowering young women", "strengthening families" and "enhancing gender equality". The two-day event commenced with an Inaugural Ceremony to introduce the purpose of the workshop, the proposed agenda and the targeted objectives. Dr Manjula O'Connor, Executive Director, ACHRH, Melbourne, as the Keynote Speaker, addressed a gathering of professors, principals of different colleges, students, members of media and other dignitaries and spoke about the global problem of family violence and dowry-related abuse in extended family system found in Australia and India. Mrs. Anju Gupta, Additional

Director General Police Mahila Sammaan Prakoshtha, 1090 Women Powerline, Lucknow was the Chief Guest. She advocated the need for young women to realize the different kinds of violence



and to raise voice against them. Professor Nishi Pandey, Director, HRDC, Lucknow University presided the Inaugural Session and praised the initiative as an important step towards educating youth in making them more gender sensitive. Professor Manju Dikshit, Principal MBP Govt. P.G. College, Lucknow, in her address spoke about the relevance of the workshop for students and teachers to achieve the target of gender equality.

This was a student-based workshop. Students ranging between 17 to 21 years were the subjects. Pre-workshop questionnaires were distributed to students, two-days prior to the workshop. The questionnaire introduced questions like defining family violence, types and causes of family violence, and the ways to reduce family violence. The answers to questions like whether women can leave violent relationships or that is it natural for a man to be the head of the family, and some unconventional ones like whether a woman has to have children to be fulfilled, forced the students to think on lines and areas which they had never reflected upon before. The answers presented in the pre-workshop questionnaire were either too predictable or showed perplexed state of minds. However, the answers in the post-workshop questionnaire revealed a completely different outcome as students were able to share their true thoughts, even if there were mixed philosophies and designs.

For the success of the workshop, it was pertinent to select students who could interact, participate through dialogues and exchange ideas. It was interesting to find that the students were more than

cooperative, eager to learn and put forth their point of view. Coming from semi-rural areas the students were delighted to have an opportunity of meeting an expert trainer and social worker from overseas, Dr Manjula O'Connor. This workshop was an entirely new experience for them and the enthusiastic students tried to imbibe the essence of it by watching the UNITED WE STAND 3 segment videos "An Ideal Family", "Arranged Marriage", "Young Couple" and joining in question and answer sessions.

Some students who belonged to Hindi medium school background also did not fail to partake in discussions as they were able to follow the videos and present their thoughts in the language they were comfortable in, that is, Hindi. And that was not a problem at all as Dr O'Connor was highly indulgent and being bi-lingual could comprehend their ideas with equal expertise.

As the coordinator of the workshop, I gauge the success of the workshop by the fact that we were able to connect relatively raw, naive and unbiased students into this training due to their own interest and deep inclination in wanting to learn. They were introduced to basic gender concepts like "patriarchy", "subordination of women", "gender roles", and "male domination" and the way it is manifested in families and societies. Along with videos, there was a power point presentation that talked about "unconscious bias" as well as statistical data based on surveys that showed the numbers and percentage of crimes and acts of violence against women across the world and the rise in the rate of crimes against women in Indian immigrants settled in Australia.

The workshop focused to train the students and to study their understanding of the Indian mentality, especially the Indian young women's needs.



Empowering the women to form networks to connect with each other was the major objective of the workshop. Some of the students who displayed leadership skills were encouraged to run similar workshops. The discussions that went for more than 3 hours on both the days were followed by distribution of HOPE Workbooks to make the students document their ideology and their ways of how to achieve healthy and happy communities.

The second day of the workshop concluded with the distribution of certificates of participation to all participants. The valedictory culminated amidst enormous applause. Dr. O'Connor proved to be a huge inspiration. Her active social work, creating awareness in youth, and issues of gender sensitization focusing especially on women empowerment is the need of the hour globally. The pre-workshop questionnaires and post-workshop questionnaires have provided important reference points and researchable data for future conduction of such workshops. The workshop was one of its kinds in the history of MBP Govt. P.G. College, Aashiyana, Lucknow, India, and we hope to continue the exercise in future to spread awareness and make this world more gender sensitive and humane.



SHEROES Cafe Lucknow

Dr Manjula O'Connor

A story of courage and fight back

I visited Lucknow on 8, 9 and 10 January to conduct HOPE workshop for students at MB Postgraduate Government College. Dr Shweta Mishra and her colleagues took me to see the "Sheroes hangout at Lucknow", a cafe run by acid attack survivors. It was an inspiring moment to see the courage and resilience of the young survivors of acid attacked (all women) running the cafe

A poem that is their vision written in Hindi on their flyer translated in English reads as follows:

Eyes have burnt

Face has wrinkled

Body parts have moved from here to there

No shortage of problems in life

Hospital is many women's home

Some are spending their life in courts

Some are getting harassed, threatened

Still we have not given up, we do not accept defeat

Our courage has not been broken

Today we are called She+Heroes!

We were served by waitresses who were brave and confident, had overcome shame and stigma. They exposed their faces for all to see the results of the



patriarchal sense of entitlement in men. Some had acid thrown at them by spurned men, because the women had dared to reject amorous advances of those men who could not own their grief and sadness, did not have emotional maturity and never thought of getting help and counselling to manage the painful process of unrequited love. There is no one in this world who has not suffered the pain of unrequited love. People do not go around throwing acid on people except those with a huge sense of entitlement.

The survivors of acid attacks, all women mounted a public interest litigation in Indian courts and got the ban on the sale of acid in India except for professional requirements. But these men are able to access the acid on false pretenses.

Another waitress who told us the distressing story of being acid-attacked by her own husband as she became pregnant with a girl child. Fortunately, she survived as did the baby girl and both are thriving in life. She said she has never felt happier being free, with friends of the same mind set, feeling the freedom no controls or coercion by husband or the in laws

The number of acid attacks have risen steadily in India since 2013. In 2017 the number was 320

A new Bollywood film Chappak is the story of a young brave young women who received acid attack by a spurned men, it has given the issue a very high profile in the country and globally winning many awards.

Press coverage of Dr O'Connor's Lucknow visit

महाराजा बिजली पासी राजकीय महाविद्यालय द्वारा दो दिवसीय अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय कार्यशाला का आयोजन

(दिस रिपोर्टर)
 लखनऊ, 04 जनवरी। महाराजा बिजली पासी राजकीय महाविद्यालय, आशियाना, लखनऊ, द्वारा 4 जनवरी, 2020 को आर्स्ट्रेलिया के ह्यूमन राइट्स एंड हेल्थ सेंटर, मेलबर्न, आर्स्ट्रेलिया से सहयोग से दो दिवसीय अंतर्राष्ट्रीय कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया गया।

इस कार्यक्रम का शीर्षक "Empowering Young Women: Early Intervention & Prevention of Family Violence", है। इस अवसर पर प्रमुख रूप से मेल्बर्न विश्वविद्यालय आर्स्ट्रेलिया से आई डॉ. मंजुला ओ'कॉनर, सक्सेसरी प्रोफेसर, ACHRH, ने किराने, छात्रों एवं अन्य हुए आतिथियों को सम्बोधित करते हुए इस संरचनात्मक शीर्षक पर व्याख्यान वैसे हुए आज की युवा महिलाओं की सशक्तिकरण पर जोर दिया एवं लैंगिक असमानता के मुद्दे की एक वैश्विक समस्या के रूप में संवेधाना करते हुए लिंग और वित्तीय स्वतंत्रता के माध्यम से युवा महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाने की अनुशंसा की।

उत्कृष्ट सत्र की अध्यक्षता लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय के अंग्रेजी विभाग के प्रोफेसर निशिता सिंह ने की। डॉ. सिंह ने हिंसा की रोकथाम के लिए कलेज द्वारा की गई पहल की प्रशंसा की। चीम्बरें अंजु गुप्ता, अतिरिक्त मानसिक चिकित्सक, महिला सम्मान प्रबंधक और चिकित्सक चक्रवर्ती ने मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में कुछ महिलाओं को विभिन्न प्रकार की हिंसा का सामना करने और उनके खिलाफ अपील करने और आवश्यक कदम की आवश्यकता की परामर्श दी। सुबदीय राजकीय महाविद्यालय प्राचार्या डॉ. मंजुला शर्मा, ने अपने संबोधन में लैंगिक समानता के लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने के लिए छात्रों और शिक्षकों दोनों के लिए कार्यशाला की प्रासंगिकता के बारे में बताया। मुनीं डॉ. श्वेता मिश्रा, जो कि विश्वविद्यालय के अंग्रेजी विभाग में सहायक प्रोफेसर हैं एवं लखनऊ वेक्टर की ब्रॉड एग्जिक्यूटिव, इस कार्यक्रम के सम्पादन में, ने भी अपने विचार व्यक्त करते हुए महिलाओं के सशक्तिकरण को आज के युवा की प्रमुख आवश्यकता बताया। भाषाविद्यालय के इतिहास विभाग की



विभागप्रधान प्रोफेसर डॉ. सतीश्वर वैदर, एवं प्रो. डॉ. सारिता सिंह, सहायक प्रो., अंग्रेजी विभाग ने कार्यक्रम प्रस्ताव दिया।

अस्पताल में आग

(साल की क्षण समकाल)
 बीएसटी, 04 जनवरी। बीएसटी की सेक्टर-२२ बिना ईंधनआर्स्ट्रेलिया अस्पताल में भीषण आग लगने से इन्होंने बच गया है। घटना की सूचना उपरान्त विभाग की दो गार्ड बिल्डिंग के अंदर घुसने की वैन गाड़ियों आग बुझाने के लिए आगे बढ़ी वर पट्टी ही। बिजलाज ब्लाक पर बहने पर लिये गए हैं। आग लगने के बाद अस्पताल ने भर्ती मरीजों को बहार निकाला गया, यहाँ तक कि जेटों में भर्ती मरीजों को भी अस्पताल से बाहर बुकिंग से निकाला।

युवा महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाया जाना बहुत जरूरी: डॉ. मंजुला

» कहा, वित्तीय स्वतंत्रता से महिलाओं को मजबूत बनाने का काम प्रशंसनीय

4पीएम न्यूज नेटवर्क

लखनऊ। राजधानी के महाराजा बिजली पासी राजकीय महाविद्यालय आशियाना में आर्स्ट्रेलिया के ह्यूमन राइट्स एंड हेल्थ सेक्टर के सहयोग से दो दिवसीय अंतरराष्ट्रीय कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया जा रहा है। इस कार्यशाला का शीर्षक 'इम्पॉवरिंग यूंग वुमैन: अर्ली इंटरवेंशन एंड प्रिवेंशन ऑफ फेमिली वॉयलेंस' रखा गया है। आयोजन में प्रमुख रूप से मेल्बर्न विश्वविद्यालय आर्स्ट्रेलिया से आई ह्यूमन राइट्स एंड हेल्थ की कार्यकारी निदेशक डॉ. मंजुला ओ'कॉनर ने शिक्षा और वित्तीय स्वतंत्रता के माध्यम



से युवा महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाया जाने की प्रशंसा की। इसे महिला विकास में अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण माना है। डॉ. मंजुला ने कहा कि यह मुद्दा अत्यंत संवेदनशील है। लैंगिक असमानता का मुद्दा वैश्विक समस्या है। इसके टोंस समाधान किया जाना चाहिए। इस कार्यशाला के उद्घाटन सत्र की अध्यक्षता लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय के अंग्रेजी विभाग की प्रोफेसर निशिता सिंह ने की। उन्होंने अपने संबोधन में हिंसा की रोकथाम के लिए कलेज की ओर से की गई पहल की सराहना की। वहाँ वुमैन पावर लाइन की अतिरिक्त महानिदेशक अंजु गुप्ता ने महिलाओं को विभिन्न प्रकार की हिंसा का एहसास करने और उनके खिलाफ अपील दर्ज कराते हुए आवाज उठाने की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया। इसके अलावा अन्य वक्ताओं ने भी अपने विचार व्यक्त किये।

युवा महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाना है: डॉ मंजुला



लखनऊ। महाराजा बिजली पासी सरकार पी.ओ. कॉलेज, में आज सुकवार को, आर्स्ट्रेलियन सेंटर फॉर ह्यूमन राइट्स एंड हेल्थ (ACHRH), मेल्बर्न, आर्स्ट्रेलिया के संयुक्त लक्ष्याधान में दो दिवसीय अंतर्राष्ट्रीय कार्यशाला का युवा महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाने है के शीर्षक से आयोजन किया गया। प्राचार्य हरशेख और चारित्रिक हिंस की रोकथाम डॉ मंजुला ओ'कॉनर, कार्यकारी निदेशक, ACHRH, विशेष रूप से उद्देश्य

की इस अवसर पर डॉ ओ कॉनर ने लैंगिक असमानता के मुद्दे को एक वैश्विक समस्या के रूप में संवेधाना किया और कहा कि शिक्षा और वित्तीय स्वतंत्रता के माध्यम से युवा महिलाओं को सशक्त बनाया जा सकता है। उद्घाटन सत्र की अध्यक्षता लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय के अंग्रेजी विभाग की प्रो निशिता सिंह ने की। प्रो। सिंह ने हिंसा की रोकथाम के लिए कलेज द्वारा की गई पहल की प्रशंसा की, अतिरिक्त महानिदेशक फुलम, महिला सम्मान



प्रकाशन और महिला पारसलखनू ने मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में अंजु गुप्ता ने युवा महिलाओं को विभिन्न प्रकार की हिंसा का एहसास करने और उनके खिलाफ अपील करने और आवाज उठाने की आवश्यकता को वकालत की। डॉ। मंजु मंडेकर, प्रिंसिपल, एमबीबी एम नर्सिंग P.G कॉलेज ने अपने संबोधन में लैंगिक समानता के लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने के लिए छात्रों और शिक्षकों दोनों के लिए कार्यशाला की

प्रसंगिकता के बारे में बताया। श्वेता मिश्रा, अंग्रेजी विभाग की सहायक प्रोफेसर और ACHRH लखनऊ वेक्टर के ब्रॉड एग्जिक्यूटिव, इस कार्यशाला की कोऑर्डिनेटर हैं डॉ. सतीश्वर वैदर, सहायक इतिहास विभाग के प्रो. डॉ. सारिता सिंह, सहायक प्रो अंग्रेजी विभाग ने धन्यवाद प्रस्ताव दिया। इस अवसर पर अन्य कलेजों के प्राचार्य और कई अन्य गणमान्य व्यक्तिक उपस्थित थे।

عالمی ورکشاپ میں تشدد کے خلاف خواتین سے آواز اٹھانے کی اپیل

اعزاز اور خواتین باور لائن اٹیوٹیٹ ہے کہا کہ نوجوان خواتین کو مختلف قسم کے تشدد کا احساس کرنے اور اس کے خلاف مداخلت اور آواز اٹھانے پر زور دیا۔ کانج کی پریسل ڈائریکٹوریٹ نے جنسی برابری کے ہدف کو حاصل کرنے کے لیے علماء اور اساتذہ دونوں کے لئے ورکشاپ کی معنویت بتائی۔ ورکشاپ کی کارڈینیشن اور کانج میں انگریزی کی اسٹنٹ پروفیسر ڈاکٹر شوبھا مشرانے خواتین کو طاقتور بنانا وقت کی اہم ضرورت بتایا۔ تاریخ کی پروفیسر ڈاکٹر سمنو حیدر نے مہمانوں کا شکریہ ادا کیا۔



قلم کے لئے کانج کی پریسل کا استقبال کرتے ہوئے لکھنؤ یونیورسٹی میں انگریزی کی پروفیسر شوبھا مشرانے تشدد کی روک

لکھنؤ (نامہ نگار) بھاراج کلی پی ای گورنمنٹ ڈگری کانج آئی این میں آئی این ایچ آر ایچ (ACHRH), بیون رائس ایڈمیٹیو میبلرن, آسٹریلیا کے تعاون سے دو روزہ عالمی ورکشاپ کا انعقاد کیا گیا ہے۔ خواتین کو طاقتور اور خواتین کے تئیں تشدد کو لے کر مستعد ورکشاپ میں مقررین نے خواتین کو طاقتور بنانے پر زور دیتے ہوئے جنسی ہم برابری کے مسئلہ کو عالمی مسئلہ کے طور پر بتایا۔ مقررین نے نوجوان خواتین کو تقسیم اور اہلی آزادی کے لئے طاقتور بنانے کی دعا کی۔ ورکشاپ کے اختتامی سیشن کی صدارت

Hindustan Times of India, 9 January 2020



■ Dignitaries after attending the seminar 'Empowering Young Women: Early Intervention and Prevention from Family Violence', at Maharaja Bijli Pasi Govt PG College. SOURCED

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

LUICKNOW: Maharaja Bijli Pasi Government PG College organised a two-day international workshop in collaboration with the Australasian Center for Human Rights and Health (ACHRH), Australia, on Thursday. The programme titled "Empowering Young Women: Early Intervention and Prevention from Family Violence" was conducted by Dr Manjula O'Connor, executive director, ACHRH. She addressed the issue of gender inequality as a global problem and how via education and financial independence, young women could be empowered. The inaugural session was presided over by Nishi Pandey, department of English, Lucknow University. Anju Gupta, additional director general of police was the chief guest, who advocated the need for young women to know different kinds of violence and raise voice against this. Dr Manju Dikshit, principal, MBP Government PG College, in her address, spoke about the relevance of the workshop for students and teachers both to achieve the target of gender equality.

हिंसा के खिलाफ आवाज उठाएं महिलाएं : अंजू गुप्ता

लखनऊ (ब्यूरो)। महाराजा बिजली पासो राज्यकय महाविद्यालय, आशियाना में ऑस्ट्रेलिया के ह्यूमन राइट्स एण्ड हेल्थ (ACHRH), मेलबर्न, ऑस्ट्रेलिया के सहयोग से दो दिवसीय अंतर्राष्ट्रीय कार्यक्रमाला का आयोजन किया गया। महिला सशक्तिकरण और महिलाओं के प्रति पारिवारिक हिंसा को लेकर आयोजित कार्यक्रमाला में वक्ताओं ने महिला सशक्तिकरण पर जोर देते हुए लैंगिक असमानता के मुद्दे को वैश्विक समस्या के रूप में सम्योहित किया। वक्ताओं ने युवा महिलाओं को शिक्षा और वित्तीय स्वतंत्रता के जरिए सशक्त बनाने की वकालत की। कार्यशाला के उद्घाटन सत्र की अध्यक्षता करते हुए लखनऊ विरवविद्यालय में अंग्रेजी की प्रोफेसर निशी पांडे ने



हिंसा की रोकथाम के लिए कॉलेज की पहल का स्वागत करते हुए अंजू गुप्ता ने कहा कि युवा महिलाओं को विभिन्न प्रकार की महानिदेशक, महिला सम्मान

प्रकाशन और महिला पावरलाइन पर बल दिया। कॉलेज की प्राचार्य डॉ. मंजू दीक्षित ने लैंगिक समता के लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने के लिए

खिलाफ आर्पित और आवाज उठाने की विभागाध्यक्ष प्रोफेसर डॉ. सनोबर हैदर और अंग्रेजी विभाग की सहायक प्रोफेसर प्रो. सतिता सिंह ने आभार जताया।

महिला सशक्तिकरण पर अंतर्राष्ट्रीय कार्यशाला आयोजित

छात्रों और शिक्षकों दोनों के लिए कार्यशाला को प्रासंगिकता बतायी। कार्यशाला की समन्वयक व महाविद्यालय में अंग्रेजी की सहायक प्रोफेसर व ACHRH लखनऊ चेंटर की ब्रांड एम्बेसडर डॉ. श्वेता मिश्रा ने महिला सशक्तिकरण को युग की अहम जरूरत बताया। कार्यशाला में उपस्थित प्रतिभागियों और अतिथियों का इतिहास विभाग की विभागाध्यक्ष प्रोफेसर डॉ. सनोबर हैदर और अंग्रेजी विभाग की सहायक प्रोफेसर प्रो. सतिता सिंह ने आभार जताया।

اسی اہم آرائی کے زیر اہتمام نوجوان خواتین کو امپاورمنٹ پر دو روزہ انٹرنیشنل ورکشاپ



لکھنؤ 9 جنوری: مہاراجہ بیجلی پاسی گورنمنٹ پی جی کالج میں آج آسٹریلیا کے انٹرنیشنل سینٹر فار ہمن رائٹس اینڈ ہیلتھ (ACHRH) کے ساتھ مل کر دو روزہ بین الاقوامی ورکشاپ "توانمند بنانے کے لیے نوجوان خواتین کو امپاورمنٹ: خاندان سے پہلے مداخلت اور خواتین کی تعلیم اور مالی آزادی کے ذریعے" کا آغاز ہوا۔ اس موقع پر انڈیا کے چیف گیسٹ جی۔ پی۔ انجو گپتا نے کہا کہ نوجوان خواتین کو تعلیم اور مالی آزادی کے ذریعے انہیں خود اعتماد بنانے کی ضرورت ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ نوجوان خواتین کو تعلیم اور مالی آزادی کے ذریعے انہیں خود اعتماد بنانے کی ضرورت ہے۔ انہوں نے کہا کہ نوجوان خواتین کو تعلیم اور مالی آزادی کے ذریعے انہیں خود اعتماد بنانے کی ضرورت ہے۔



9 January 2020 with my host A/Professor Shweta Mishra at esplanade by the Gomti River, Lucknow.

ACHRH Launch of the Evaluation Report of Mutual Relational Respect (MRR) Training Project

Mr. Chidambaram Srinivasan

I am very thankful to ACHRH for inviting me to the ACHRH Launch Event on Fri 13 Dec 2019.

I congratulate Prof Howie (President) and Dr Manjula O'Connor (Executive Director) and everyone connected with the Project,

for their tireless efforts to produce such a useful and well researched Report.

It was my privilege to take part at the launch of the ACHRH organisation in Sep 2012 with the aim of proposing innovative solutions to build safer and stronger families.

Over the years, ACHRH, under the stewardship of Dr Manjula O'Connor, has undertaken many valuable and much needed Projects in this area, such as

+ Natak Vihar Community Participatory Theatre (based on the belief that there is no higher form of contact with humans than art and using art to

develop community-based solutions in the service of human rights and human problems in the Australasian region.

+ United We Stand project - Primary Prevention of Family Violence Program.

+ Mutual Cultural Respect (MCR).

+ Mutual Relational Respect (MRR) project.

The landmark achievement of ACHRH has been the anti-dowry abuse and extortion campaign commenced in 2013 which successfully became a recommendation in the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence 2016 Report, before becoming law in Victoria on 29 March 2019.

Based on a framework of primary prevention of violence against women, the aim of the MRR Project was achieved i.e. to engage meaningfully with key stakeholders and the local community using culturally relevant approaches.

It is commendable that over 220 people from seven South Asian community groups and one local Council took part in the MRR workshops and

7 community members were trained as Facilitators. Hopefully, these Facilitators will be able to conduct similar Workshops in future.

The project results have highlighted the need to address areas of concern especially "attitudes indicating beliefs that domestic violence is a private matter,

that it is a woman's duty to stay in a violent relationship to keep the family together and that it is shameful for her family if a woman reports abuse by her partner to outsiders".

To enhance and sustain the outcomes achieved so far, attitudinal change to family violence issues call for long term work and take time.

Ongoing primary prevention work based on community engaged and culturally relevant work is essential with appropriate funding.

Best Wishes to Professor Howie and Dr Manjula O'Connor for continuing this work with dedication and commitment to this cause in further Projects in this area.



Understanding Dowry and Dowry Abuse in Australia

Manjula O'Connor, Jan Breckenridge, Sara Singh and Mailin Suchting

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (November-December 2019)

Printed at UNSW website

The practice of dowry usually involves the giving of money, property, goods or other gifts by one family to another before, during or any time after marriage. The practice of dowry is a universal practice. For example, Bombay Island, now called Mumbai a former Portuguese outpost was gifted to England as dowry in the marriage of Catherine of Braganza to Charles II (and was later leased to the East India Company in 1668). In its modern-day avatar dowry as a practice has different customary characteristics across different communities. Dowry exchange in South Asian communities is characterised by the woman's family providing goods (including but not limited to money, jewellery, furniture and appliances) to the male and his family. In North African and Middle Eastern communities, dowry is characterised by the man's family providing goods (predominantly in the form of money or cattle) to the female and her family.

The [Australasian Centre of Human Rights and Health \(ACHRH\)](#) has refined the definition to include dowry as 'substantial gifts' in the context of a marriage, where the value of gifts is out of proportion to the income of either family and causes financial distress to the giver.

Dowry is an ancient practice most frequently associated with India, but in reality, it is a cultural practice globally. This essay deals with dowry in the South Asian context. Dowry in ancient times originated as a form of ante mortem inheritance, meant only for the bride. In modern times dowry gifts are expected by the family of the receiver as well, and

has become a practice that is a product of patriarchy reinforcing gender inequality. Women activists have campaigned against dowry practices in India since 1961 recognising the toxic impact of patriarchy combined with greed, and growing evidence of serious violence, murders and suicides associated with dowry in India.

Dowry abuse

The [United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women](#) has defined dowry-related violence as 'any act of violence or harassment associated with the giving or receiving of dowry at any time before, during or after the marriage'.

Money is power and like any power is open to abuse in an unequal situation. Dowry is one such practice. Where there is gender inequality and unequal power between the bride and the groom, the path to violence against women, dowry related death-murder and suicide becomes possible. In the Australian context, the unequal power relations are in some ways magnified because the bride is usually a new immigrant to Australia and often on a temporary visa such as a partner visa or dependent visa of the groom (the sponsor). The groom commands a higher dowry value by dint of Australian Residency. To this extent, the immigration process can allow the groom to gain additional power over the bride. In addition, the Sponsor holds the power to withdraw his sponsorship, leaving the new migrant bride vulnerable to abandonment and threats of deportation by him and the system. These issues are often compounded by lack of family and social protective mechanisms that they have access to in

their own country, and the social isolation that many brides experience as new immigrants. There is emerging evidence that some perpetrators collect dowry in India, leave the brides behind in India never sponsoring them. The exact figures of abandoned brides in India is not known. Similarly, there is no good data available on the numbers of women abandoned within Australia, including those who are tricked into returning back home.

The Dowry is gifts that are often particularly 'excessive' when compared to the income and assets of the family giving them. Although the demands are often unstated there is expectation that oversized gifts will be given. "Insufficient" dowry can be accompanied by acts of violence towards the woman and her family, or other acts of abuse including emotional and economic abuse, harassment or stalking to exact compliance with demands or to punish the victim for non-payment. In this way, dowry abuse differs from other acts of family violence in that a number of individuals can be involved in perpetrating acts of violence, including in-laws, former spouses and fiancés, and other family members. To this extent, dowry abuse is a cultural manifestation of domestic and family violence, and also a form of financial abuse.

Perpetrators can conduct sham and fraudulent marriages, extort dowry and abandon the brides. These perpetrators escape accountability by hiding in developed economies such as Australia, the UK, USA, Europe, the Middle East and Singapore. However, the abandoned brides themselves go through severe trauma, are stigmatised, may experience a sense of failure, sometimes rejected by their own family as they are cheated of their dowry saved over many years, are often left pregnant, and must manage resulting mental health issues. Sometimes they are duped into returning back to their country after migration. They have no rights to residency of the developed country their perpetrator/ husband lives in

and no laws to protect them in this transnational space.

Two of these women travelled from India to attend the [Second National Dowry Abuse Summit](#) hosted by the Australasian Centre for Human Rights and Health and UNSW Sydney and co-hosted by Harmony Alliance, InTouch, Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA), Good Shepherd, White Ribbon and South West Sydney Local Health District, held in Sydney Australia on 22 February 2019 and spoke about their painful, harrowing experiences. The women – who felt voiceless and powerless before – both have been accorded residency in Australia as special cases. Their experiences highlight the need for systematic support for women impacted by dowry abuse.

Dowry abuse in Australia

Dowry abuse is perceived as a growing problem in some communities in Australia. The [Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence](#) recently found that it was a particular concern in Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, and increasingly in Middle Eastern communities, although it is important to note that it is not confined to any one ethnic, cultural or religious group. Care is needed in public discourse so as not to stereotype or vilify one particular group. Migrant diaspora communities continue to engage in the practice of dowry as a central marriage custom. Migration status can be used to demand higher dowries which when not fulfilled result in abuse and violence.

The Commission noted that the extent of the practice is considerable in Victoria. The growing concern of the impacts of dowry abuse gave rise to a grass roots campaign against dowry and dowry abuse, with a [petition raised by the ACHRH](#) that demanded dowry abuse be included in the Family Violence Protection Act of Victoria as an example of economical abuse. In addition, community participatory theatre projects

and a video titled have increased the community's understanding of the issues.

However, it appears that there is very limited understanding amongst the police, social workers and the legal profession in Australia as to what dowry is, how it is practiced, and how it may be linked to family violence. For example, in the case of one

Indian woman who was ultimately killed by her husband, her complaints to police about dowry appear to have been misunderstood and the seriousness of the issue may have been downplayed due to lack of cultural awareness. This highlights the need for increased cultural awareness and greater education about dowry abuse for service providers in Australia.

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

- **POLICE IN EMERGENCY -- 000**
- **YOUR GP -- they are helpful, easy to reach, they will refer you to the right place.**
- **NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE -- 1800 RESPECT**
- **INTOUCH MULTICULTURAL CENTER AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE – 1800 755 988**
- **WOMENS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRISIS SERVICE (WDVCS) 24 Hour state wide line 1800 015 188**
- **MEN'S 24 HOUR REFERRAL SERVICE 1800 065 973 (FREE CALL VICTORIA ONLY)**
- **VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN'S COALITION 03 9654 1243**
virwc@virwc.org.au, www.virwc.org.au
- **WOMEN'S INFORMATION & REFERRAL AGENCY (WIRE) 03 9348 9416**
inforequests@wire.org.au
- **DR MANJULA O'CONNOR, FOUNDING DIRECTOR ACHRH 03 9654 5271**
manjula@achrh.org

WHY GET HELP?

- ❖ Domestic Violence damages our culture
- ❖ Domestic violence breaks our homes
- ❖ Domestic Violence causes:
 - Anxiety,
 - Depression,
 - Suicide,
 - Homicide in women, men and children

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- ❖ Support those who may be victims
- ❖ Encourage victims to seek help and become survivors
- ❖ Encourage perpetrators to seek help
- ❖ DO NOT BE SILENT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

*Say No to Family Domestic
Violence*