

**Minutes of the In-House Gender Sensitization Programme held on 1-2 May 2019,  
Manav Adhikar Bhawan, C-Block, GPO Complex, INA New Delhi**

An In-House Gender Sensitization Programme for NHRC employees was organized in the Commission on 1-2 May 2019 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. both days under the chairmanship of Smt. Jyotika Kalra, Hon'ble Member, NHRC. **The program was conducted by Smt. Jayashree Velankar, Director, Jagori, New Delhi**, and was attended by Shri. Jaideep Govind, Secretary General, NHRC and Shri. Dilip Kumar, Joint Secretary (T&R) along with officers and staff of NHRC.

2. The objective of the program was to sensitize the participants on gender issues, to help them be aware of gender biases, to help them resolve interpersonal conflicts arising from gender issues and to enable them to act assertively and respond to challenges in the workplace.

3. **Shri. Dilip Kumar, Joint Secretary (T&R), NHRC**, welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of Gender Sensitization and how any sort of training is essential in the workplace. He also emphasized that it is crucial to take into account our sub-conscious behavior which reaffirms gender roles and stereotypes.

4. **Shri. Jaideep Govind, Secretary General, NHRC**, welcomed the participants and elucidated that historically women have been oppressed and discriminated by it social evil like Sati. Even today, various crimes are committed against women, though Government has made various legal provisions to curb such malice. Gender sensitization programme is important to open the dialogue of gender equality in India.

5. **Smt. Jyotika Kalra, Hon'ble Member, NHRC**, welcomed the participants and hoped that the gender sensitization programme will lead to certain change as the last such program led to a 'women's room' in NHRC. She informed that gender is a socio-cultural construct. Biologically men and women are different; however, gender is more likely expressed through gender roles between men and women. At this point, it is crucial that we demystify gender roles and myths associated with men and women such as; blue is for boys and pink is for girls and alike. She emphasized that women at the workplace are assigned work in cultural activities based on their gender roles; while men are receiving guests from the airport, women are more likely involved in food and decoration preparations. Gender sensitization is important at the workplace, as it makes the place to work more comfortable for women and offers support systems to help them be more productive.

6. Since the programme was for two days, on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019, it was attended by the officers of the Commission, while the staff attended the program on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. The programme was broadly divided into the following themes:

- Gender and Sex: A social construct

- Patriarchy: Affected by caste, class, age, and religion
- Reproductive Labour- unpaid domestic/care work
- Society and Social Institutions perpetuating systemic oppression
- Human Rights and Women's Rights

7. Smt. Velankar addressed the gathering and informed that gender sensitization is crucial, as women's workplace is their home as well, and thus, sensitivity towards gender issues need to percolate into our lives. Further elaborating on the **difference between gender and sex**, she explained that while sex is biological, the gender, on the other hand, is a result of the roles assigned to men and women by society. These roles are historically assigned and determine gender identities. Smt. Velankar elucidated on the biological and psychological aspects of transgenders; including trans-men, trans-women, intersex and cis-gender.

8. Smt. Velankar stated that, social discrimination is affected by caste, class, age, religion, gender, etc while patriarchy gives power to men; all men are not equal due to several variables mentioned. Patriarchy affects men as well with regards to their social and financial status in the society; therefore patriarchy does not give advantage to a specific person but is context specific.

9. Smt. Velankar emphasized that women and men both are a by-product of social institutions, gender roles are institutionalized through socialization, which eventually discriminates and perpetuates stereotyping of gender roles among men and women. It is thus crucial to start acknowledging the value of work done by women at home, as part of reproductive labor. Women's unpaid care/domestic work is not considered work, rather an institutional responsibility; therefore, it becomes important that social institutions are sensitive towards the gender roles, which put women in a subordinate position than men in the domestic space.

10. In the end, Dr. M.D.S. Tyagi, Joint Director (Research), thanked Smt. Velankar and her Jagori team for conducting a thought-provoking program on both days. He further stated that not all of us are gender sensitized. It is crucial to be aware of such issues, and to keep the discussion alive in our conscience.

\*\*\*\*\*