**Web-Discussion Series**

**Rebuilding Women’s Lives in Post COVID-19 Period**

**Organized by Oxfam India and School of Women’s Studies, Utkal University**

**Dates of the Series: 14th August to 23rd October (See specific dates with each session)**

**Context**

The pandemic COVID 19 has impoverished the already impoverished, marginalized the already marginalized and have pushed the excluded to further exclusion zones. On the Beijing +25 years, when the world community was quite optimistic about the progress the women community has made over the years, it has been traumatized by the rude shock the virus has inflicted. There is unanimity of opinion among the policy planners, practitioners, academia and intelligentsia that the development wheel designed for the women has witnessed a roll back. The narratives that has been unfolded by this pandemic is going to reinforce the public-private dichotomy and women’s space within homes. The pandemic has impacted the livelihood of the impoverished population very badly and the burden of sustaining the family is felt increasingly on women. Similarly, the issues and concerns of women informal workers in general and migrant workers in particular have been invisible in larger narratives. This invisibility has been felt in actions as well as in conversations forged by government as well as civil society. The current pandemic has increased food and nutrition insecurity of women and girls. The availability of food has been drastically reduced. Going ahead, this will increase MMR, IMR and lack of SRHR. Not only domestic violence but experiences suggest that like any disaster, there is every likelihood of increase in child marriage and trafficking. The anecdotal evidences suggest that the dominant reason for domestic violence has been women’s refusal of repeated demand for sexual gratification by men during this period while men are at home. The pattern and severity of violence in domestic space has witnessed a new dimension which is likely to reinforce regressive gender norms and masculinity.

With the above context and consideration that there is a dearth of conversation around the degree and extent of impact of COVID on women, Oxfam India in collaboration with School of Women’s Studies, Utkal University has planned to organize a series of discussions with the following objectives.

**Objectives**

* To build discourses on the impact of COVID on different aspects of the lives of women and girls in society
* To come up with an action plan which could be implemented at an individual organizational level or at collective level to improve the situation of women and girls

**Details of the web- discussion series**

The series having 6 episodes of discussions on following themes will be organized from 14th August to 23rd October, 2020.

**Episode-1: Women Issues in the aftermath of COVID-19: Responsibility and Responses of State and Civil society**

Date: 14th August, 2020 Time: 11 am to 12.30 pm

The episodes-1 intends to capture the narratives on impact of COVID on women from global to local context. During the pandemic, though sporadic, yet many interventions have been initiated to respond to the issues of women. Further, the government has also set up mechanisms to respond to the livelihood, awareness, protection and health issues of vulnerable communities. The discussion is expected to unfold a mapping on the efficacy of these responses to ensure entitlements to women, their short comings and will through light on the steps that can be undertaken by civil society and the government to make them effectively reach out to target population i.e. women and girls.

**Episode-2: Women and Work: Looking beyond COVID**

Date: 29th August, 2020 Time: 11 am to 12.30 pm

The COVID 19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown has severely impacted women’s work both in terms of unpaid care work and in productive engagement. It has triggered a huge movement of informal women workers from one city to another, from one state to other the state. But the movement of women workers has not been captured in conversations, in enumeration as well as in any policy prescriptions as movement of independent women workers. Their independent labour identity has not been captured or recognized. On the other hand, the workers’ movement during the pandemic need to be understood from the perspectives of India’s urban led growth models, growing dualistic/ segmented nature of the labor economy and high prevalence of gender bias in the labor economy. In this context, the episode-2 intends to capture the issues, challenges and prospects of women in terms of care work and in informal productive work.

**Episode-3: Women and Education: Situation and Solutions**

**Date: 18th September, 2020 Time: 11 am to 12.30 pm**

An estimate suggest that COVID has affected 900 million learners of the world. The girls adolescent and young bear the disproportionate burden of the loss of education. The closure of schools and higher learning institutions have pushed these young learners into their homes. This is found to be having a negative repercussion of the progress of the education of these girls. The Episode-3 is expected to capture how loss of education has impacted women and the policy solutions that has come up to compensate the loss.

**Episode-4: Women and Health: Issues of Access**

**Date: 30th September, 2020 Time: 11 am to 12.30 pm**

The pandemic has severely impacted women’s health in terms of sexual reproductive health and mental health. This in turn has impacted the well-being of women. The Episode-4 is expected to encapsulate narratives around the impact of COVID on women’s wellbeing and the issues of access during COVID and aftermath.

**Episode-5: COVID and Violence against Women**

**Date: 16th October, 2020 Time: 11 am to 12.30 pm**

UN describes violence against women as pseudo pandemic. This is a pan-global phenomenon. Many reports brought out by different actors including National Commission for Women and media houses suggest that the incidence and severity of violence against women have increased during the pandemic period. Some of the reports have also suggested a link between the increase in unaffordable health services, burden of care work and increased demand for sexual gratification in marital relationship, increase in food insecurity etc. have potential to further accentuate the incidence of violence. In another extreme, the women and girls also have faced many challenges in accessing the violence services. In this context, the Episode-5 intends to capture an in-depth analysis of the situation and the way forward to ensure violence services to women and girls.

**Episode-6: Role of Media in addressing women’s rights issues in COVID and post COVID period**

**Date: 23rd October, 2020 Time: 11 am to 12.30 pm**

Barring few, the issues of women’s rights seem to be invisible in media conversations. The stories which are captured in different media are limited to the plight of women during their movement from urban to rural areas. Hence, the last episode intends to capture the possible role of media houses in highlighting women’s rights issues during the pandemic and in the post pandemic period.

**Target Audience**

The discussion series aim to reach out to at least 100 participants for each session from following sections.

* CSO representatives who are practicing in the field of women’s rights issues
* Academic Institutions and students from different parts of the country
* Government officials who are in responsibility of ensuring services and entitlements to women
* Young champions who are part of Oxfam India’s campaign to promote violence free relationship
* Partners and alliance members of Oxfam India who are engaged in social interventions to promote women’s rights
* Practicing journalists

**Expected Outcome**

* This discussion series will build conversation around women’s rights in the context of COVID
* The discourses and discussion initiated in these 6 episodes will generate a solid action plan for future program intervention

**RSVP**

**Prof. Navaneeta Rath, Utkal University (9437211588)**

**Rukmini Panda, Oxfam India (9439339388)**