Students’ initiatives for achieving Gender Equality in Haryana, India- A Case Study of Bhagat Phool Singh Women’s University

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Goal 5 of SDGs focuses on Gender Equality

• lot of efforts have been made to achieve gender equality under Millennium Development Goals.

• Statistics show that 1 in 5 women and girls between the ages of 15-49 have reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner within a 12-month period and 49 countries currently have no laws protecting women from domestic violence. Globally, 750 million women and girls were married before the age of 18 and at least 200 million women and girls in 30 countries have undergone female genital mutilation.
Gender Inequality in India

• Deep rooted patriarchal norms and unequal power relationship between men and women.

• As per UNDP report, India ranks 132 out of 187 countries on gender inequality index (GII). One of the major reason for the low rank is because of the skewed ratio, with only 914 females for every 1000 males, according to Indian government data. As per UNDP report, only 29% of Indian women above the age of 15 in 2011 were part of labour force, as compared to 80.7% men. In parliament too, only 10.9% of law makers are women.
Higher Education Institutions and community engagement

• The interface between university and society has been gaining importance.
• Students broaden their horizon and society realizes their own indigenous knowledge of solving their own problems.
• Efforts both international and national level for community University engagement.
Objectives of the Paper.

• Initiatives taken by the students for combating gender inequality.
• ascertain the impact on rural women.
• Suggestions for effective student’s participation in community engagement.
Methodology

• Intensive field action work.
• Descriptive and qualitative in nature.
• Both primary & secondary data have been used.
• Focused group discussion with community based organizations.
About Haryana and BPSWU.

• As far as Haryana state is concerned, it is one of the fastest growing state of India. The state has a dismal record on gender issues, though its economic growth is quite appreciable with the highest per capita income in India (Economic Survey of India 2015-16).
• First residential State women’s university in the north part of India providing education from Kindergarten to Ph.D.
• Addressing gender disparity is at the heart of BPSWU’s mission and its engagement policy that women should contribute to the advancement of their communities and that the university should raise the status of women in society by producing strong leaders.
• BPSWU is the only and first university in India which set up Centre for Society University Interface and Research (CSUIR) for bridging the gap between university and society.
Innovative practices of community engagement initiated by students

- Establishment of Community Resource Center in collaboration with Village Council
- Formation of Self Help Group in promoting Micro enterprise
- Open defecation free village
- Political Participation of Women
- Prevention on Child Marriages
Impact of the Intervention

- Deliberation on pertinent issues.
- Positive change for education of girls.
- Improvement in sex ratio
- Information being provided at a doorstep of CRC.
- Women build confidence and build rapport with govt. and non-govt. officials.
- Construction of toilets in the households
- Women’s participation in local governance increased.
- Timely intervention and prevention for child marriage.
Suggestions for effective student’s participation in community engagement

• Autonomy to universities to prepare their own programs, courses and initiatives more relevant to the needs of society.
• New training/awareness programmes for students and faculty for building a community engagement model for other universities in India and abroad to follow.
• Designing new curricula and courses, short term workshops, and certificate and degree courses for students should be developed.
• Best practice in community engagement need to be identified for the benefit of the academic fraternity and the society at large.
• Special funding should be earmarked for community university engagement.
• Partnership programs like student mobility, joint research, joint publication, staff exchange to other universities where both teachers and students can learn from their best practices and implement the same in their respective universities is another step for making community university engagement interesting and involving.
Conclusion

• Need of the hour is to call for cooperation, coordination among various stakeholders and overcome challenges that universities and HEIs have been facing in present times.

• There is a dire need of whole-hearted commitment on the part of people who have zeal to work towards community improvement. They may be instrumental in building the capacity of the people in the community and can also represent the interests of all sections of the society.

• In order to bridge the gap between university and society, integration of knowledge of theory and practice is needed. This kind of integration is an urgent task in higher education institutions which will result in the positive revolution in human capital.
Awareness Generation
• Thank you.