

# Webinar

On

The Concerns Pertaining to Women: Socio-Economic and Political  
&

Importance of Networking

Date: 15.08.2020 (Saturday)

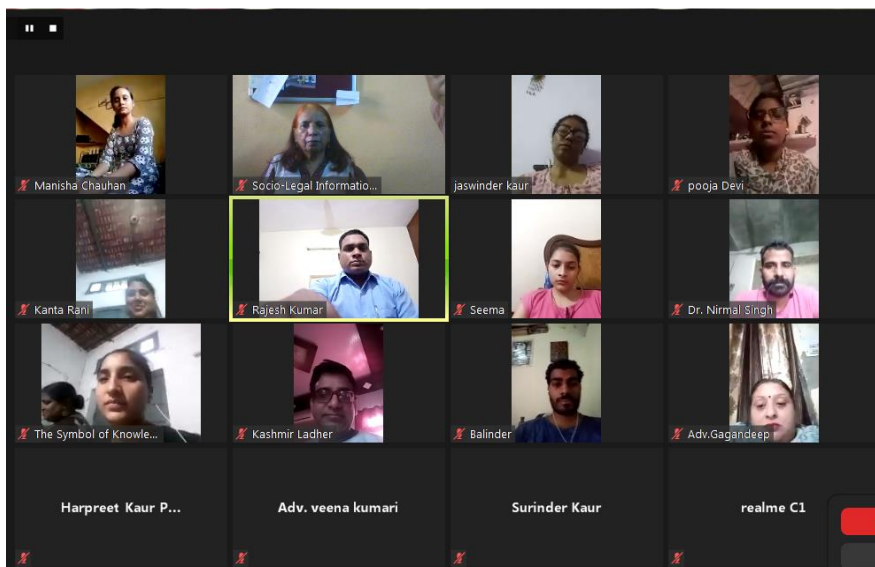
03.00 PM to 5.15 PM

By

Human Rights Law Network, Chandigarh. & Ambedkarite Women's  
Era

Zoom Meeting ID: 990 0323 3870

Pass -code: 629576



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Timing	Speaker	Topic
03.00 to 03.10	Adv. Veena Kumari, HRLN, Chandigarh.	Welcome & Concept Sharing
03.10 to 03.35 pm	Ms. Harpreet Kaur, Education and Health Activist	Social Challenges faced by Women
03.35 to 04.00 pm	Ms. Sonam, Women Rights Activist & Law Student	Economical and Political Challenges faced by Women
04.00 to 4.20 pm	Adv. Gagandeep Kaur, DDVA	Rural Women in Bondage

04.20 to 04.50pm	Rajesh Kumar, Advocate & Rights Activist	Importance of Networking
04.50 to 5.10pm	Discussion	Discussion
05.10		Vote of Thanks

Socio-Legal Information Centre HRLN is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: The Concerns Pertaining to Women: Socio-Economic and Political & Importance of Networking

Date and Time: Aug 15, 2020 03:00 PM India

Join Zoom Meeting

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# Report

A one day webinar on “The Concerns Pertaining to Women: Socio-Economic and Political & Importance of Networking was organized by the Human Rights Law Network , Chandigarh in collaboration with Dalit Dastan Virodhi Andolan(DDVA) & Ambedkarite Women’s Era on 15.08.2020.



The welcome note was delivered by Adv. Veena Kumari on behalf of Human Right Law Network, Chandigarh & Ambedkarite Women’s Era. While welcoming the speakers and the participants, she shared the agenda and objective of the webinar with the participants. She said that it is a hard fact that the women in every phase of their life are regulated and controlled by their male relations who could be father, brother, husband, live-in partner and son. But this situation becomes ironical when we women instead of realizing the obstructions in our exposure, self confidence and development start glorifying these obstructions. We feel that these relations are protecting us whereas this so called protection in real sense is a big hurdle in our confidence building, development and networking.

She shared further with the house that generally women claim we are not required to earn or to go to market for petty purchases, we are not required to go to the bank and not required to file the income tax report since these jobs are

done by our male relations. But we forget that the situation is other way round. In the process of dependency we get deprived from very important life skills. She further added that we have started talking about teaching our boys the domestic chores and in the same manner we need to teach our daughters to become self -reliant and to get equipped with all kind of life skills.

### **Ms. Harpreet Kaur**



The first speaker in the Webinar was Ms. Harpreet Kaur from District Mansa, Punjab. She has a vast experience of work in health sector in rural areas of Punjab, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Since the webinar was taking place on 15/08/2020, she opened her address with the best wishes of Independence Day and then added few lines from the Bani( Religious Poetry) of Sh. Guru Nanak Dev Ji, The first guru of the Sikhs. She said that our Guru Ji had observed centuries back that the ‘women who gives births to great kings cannot be condemned ‘ and then she added the aspiration of a young girl who wants to fly and asks the society and system not to cut her wings since she wants to fly and fly. While talking about the status of women especially in rural areas she shared with the house that 90% of the women are living in suppressed and humiliating conditions. According to her it is immaterial whether a woman is educated, professional, skilled or uneducated; almost her status is the same.

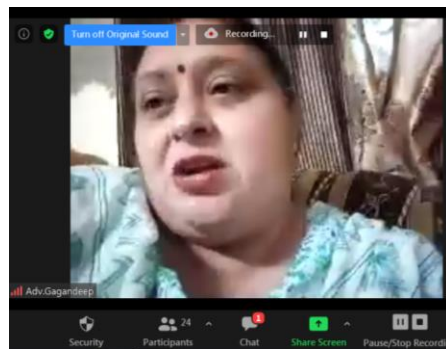
Ms. Harpreet Kaur lamented that there is no participation of women in any sphere of life. The women are oriented from the very childhood to become depended upon their male relations. Any girl or woman, whenever going to market or some other place, is asked to take along her brother even if the said brother is 10 years old and younger to her. Gradually she becomes used not to go out without the company of a male member.

Ms. Harpreet Kaur further added that women are not provided the requisite support and co-operation by their families which could lead them to their development. They are not provided the freedom even to get dressed up according to their choice, to get married to the boy of their choice or to select the profession of their taste. The women are to move according to the instructions of their father, husband or son. She also added that we the women are reduced to the kitchen or to the house and consequently we have no exposure of the outer world.

Ms. Harpreet Kaur also shared with the house that even after the 74 years of the Independence we cannot discuss our problem and issues with our families. Even well educated girl can only work outside if her husband wants so and her income is not considered the basic income but only added, additional or supplementary income. According to her the image of women in rural areas and even to some extent in urban areas is perceived on the basis of her dress and any girl clad in jeans is considered a loose character. Keeping and talking over mobile is also not appreciated. She shared her experience about the meeting of Gram Panchayat and told that if a woman is elected as a Panch or Sarpanch, it is her husband who is to take decision on her behalf and she is required only to sign. Even she either herself is not keen to attend the meeting or discouraged by the family to be present in the meeting, therefore, generally she doesn't go to attend the said meetings.

Ms. Harpreet Kaur added that in the civilization and culture , we the women are deprived from various human rights which include social, political and economical. Our income is also not our income and the male members are to decide how to utilize this income. We are allowed to work if our male members feel it is required. She also shared her experiences pertaining to sexual harassment at workplace. She also spoke on the issue of MNREGA stating that the environment is not congenial on the sites of work being done under MNREGA and the provisions of the Act are not being implemented especially required for women participation. She spoke about her experience while talking over mobile phone to ASHA workers in Bihar pertaining to her work wherein the male members even refused to put on line the said ASHA workers in the said State while saying that she cannot speak and she could leave the message for the said worker.

### **ADV. GAGANDEEP KAUR**



Advocate Gagandeep is an active functionary of DDVA, the organization working on the issue of Bonded Labour, MNREGA, Brick Kiln workers and an instrument in Preventing Atrocities against Dalits in Punjab. She was to speak on the issue of Bondage of Dalit Women in Rural Area, which is rarely talked. Since the previous speaker has wished Independence Day to the house, she contended that she also wanted to wish the same but unfortunately cannot do the same. According to her in fact despite of 74 years of so called independence we are miles away from the real independence. We have not got freedom from our

bondage and we are still regulated by our families especially male relations like father, brother, husband and sons. She shared with the house that though the state of Punjab is known as a prosperous state in other parts of the country, but the situation at ground level especially in the rural areas is entirely different. She added further that the rural dalit women are generally non- entity and become entity only at the time of elections.

She shared that the most of dalit women in rural Punjab are uneducated and unskilled. They do work in the dominant Jat houses for managing and lifting the cow/ buffalo/dung and also to do all other kind of work whichever is ordered by those houses in the morning and evening at least for two hours each time. She added that in the situation of crisis, these poor women are forced to take loan from the Zimidar and Moneylender in the village and in case they are unable to return the same in time which generally happens, these moneylenders go on adding interest at very high rates. Consequently, after one generation the next generation is forced to continue the same work due to the family debt. She informed the house that in case of male labour, they are divided into four categories: highly skilled, skilled, semi skilled and unskilled. They are to get wages according to the category they belong and there is a revision in the wages time to time. But in case of women they are not even put in any category of labour. They are not considered even as labour and whenever any team of researcher goes to have a meeting with the labour in the village only male labour come to participate since these women are not considered as the labour. She further informed the house that during daily work these women get a glass of milk and at the end of the year they get 2 quintal wheat per cattle and on calculation it was found that the wages of these women are less than Rs. 8 per day.

Ms. Gagandeep shared the said untold misery of these rural women which she had witnessed in the study conducted in the 10 villages of Malwa belt of Punjab.



These Rural dalit women are to take care of their own house, children and alcoholic and drug addicted husbands and then to work in the houses of dominant caste people on very nominal wages which are never revised. She also shared that number of times these women are sexually exploited but cannot share with their families due to two reasons: one feeling ashamed that this has happened to them and secondly they would not be believed rather would be blamed by their family as well. Due to these reasons these women keep silent despite of sexual exploitation by the dominant caste people.

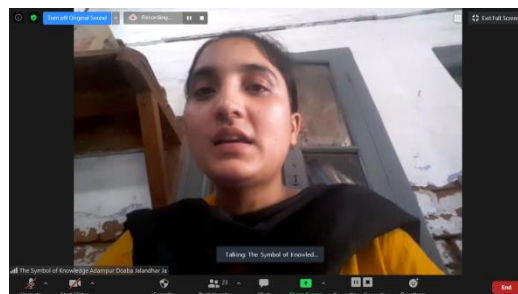
Adv. Gagandeep also shared that in one survey it was found that the economical entitlements are not reaching to the genuine persons but to the persons who are not eligible. She spoke about MNREGA also and mentioned that instead of 100 days in a year the work should be made available for 365 days and in that situation there would not be any need of BPL cards etc, since the people would be earning enough to meet their needs. She also shared that the job cards under BOCW Act are issued to the persons who are not workers at all, rather are big Zimidars, therefore, the verification of these cards is required. While talking about the concession up to 200 units in electricity bill, she told that during COVID there are number of families who received huge electricity bills even up to Rs. 40000 to 50000/- . Since they could not pay these bills, their electricity connections got disconnected though electricity is an essential service.

Adv. Gagandeep shared a pathetic story of a dalit woman whom she had met during the study in Mansa Block. This woman was 70 years old and after carrying the huge weight of cow dung on her head in routine basis throughout her life, she had lost hair from the particular area of her head where the container of dung used to be placed and the same has become extremely soft. She also shared the situation of drinking water in the rural areas which she had observed in her study. She told that the ROs have been installed in the rural Punjab but only in the areas suitable to dominant people and these dalit women

are supposed to carry water from far away. Even timing of working of ROs are not according to the time suitable to dalit women. Further they are to give Rs. 200/- per month to get a card for taking water from ROs which they cannot afford and due to these circumstances they are to drink polluted water and the State of Punjab is having the most polluted drinking water. Due to the polluted water the state of Punjab is having number of cancer patients and even a train which takes them to Bikaner in Rajasthan where they can get treatment with low cost is known as the Cancer Train.

Adv. Gagandeep suggested that dalit women are required to get united on a single platform. She also suggested that we the women, who are lucky enough to get educated, also need to understand our social responsibility and even if one woman can improve the status of 10 women it would be deemed as a real and concrete contribution towards society. We should not lose our patience rather we need to understand their issues, challenges and economical constraints then to contribute whatever we can do. Our own aspirations should not be our limit. She also spoke about medical facilities and withdrawal of the scheme Bhai Bhagat Singh Scheme. Adv. Gagandeep concluded her speech with thanks to HRLN and the Participants.

### **MS. SONAM**



Ms. Sonam the next speaker was a law student and active worker with Ambedkarite Women's Era and Symbol of knowledge. She had come along with a group of dalit women having different concerns.

Sonam opened her address with the concern pertaining to declining child ratio. She started her address with that if there is birth of second girl child in the family; the common comments are that the responsibility of the father has increased. Nothing is mentioned about the response of emotion of the mother for whom both the sex whether male child or female child is equal and require equal care.

Ms. Sonam shared that there is no participation of women in any small or big matter since it is presumed that she is with lesser brain and does not have any understating of the matters pertaining to money. She lamented that alcoholism and drug addiction in the state of Punjab is very prevalent and the women have to work for the whole day without any respect or support. She mentioned about the activities carried out by her group which is always mutually and supportive. She observed that if the women want to work, there is no cooperation and support from the family. While talking about public status she shared the status of women Panches & Sarpanches who have nothing to do with the decision making and even they are not allowed to attend the meeting and their role is only limited to sign the resolution. While talking about the electoral rights of the women she shared that even the women cannot cast their vote according to their choice and is to cast it in the favor of the candidate whom the husbands want.



Ms. Sonam had come with a group of women who spoke about their legal and other issues which were discussed and replied accordingly.

## **Advocate Rajesh Kumar, Convener, and Association of volunteers for students**



Advocate Rajesh Kumar, an activist from Schedule community, leader of Association of Students rights spoke about the concerns of the women from the rural Punjab and importance of networking amongst them. While addressing the house he shared that in the rural as well as in the urban areas sports outlet and youth clubs are missing for women. In other areas like when some project or event in the rural area is introduced either the women are just organizer of the event or there is no share for them.

Advocate Rajesh Kumar observed that to get their equal share the women have to get united and also to do social networking. It was also observed that when the girls are to go to some other town for interview etc. the family is reluctant to send them due the insecure situations qua women and if the females are having some networking they could go in a group or to stay with some friend who is staying already in the town where the female is required to go for some work. In other words the total dependency on the family members can be addressed in this manner

Advocate Rajesh also shared that there could be sharing of the extra books and literature amongst the girls/women who are connected by social networking. It was also discussed that generally the males are having number of friends where as the females are not having. In the situation of crisis like domestic violence

there can be constructive sharing if we have strong social networking. To facilitate networking amongst senior citizens was also discussed.

The bullet points emerged in the above said presentation are flagged as follows:

- The women are lacking connectivity and Networking
- Social Networking is very important
- It can help us in winning over dependency on family members.
- It can help us in getting equal share in the development schemes in rural areas after getting united and connected
- It can be very useful in the situation of crisis.
- Reading material and information can be shared.
- Connectivity gives extra confidence and it can be furthered from village to town and then distant towns.
- It does not need much time to stay connected.
- If we are united we are definitely to get our share in policy making as well and we would not be reduced only to event manager.

There was a discussion and suggestions on certain points by the house which included to review the festivals promoting patriarchy and to get some income generation projects in the rural areas so that women could become economically independent.

The meeting was concluded with vote of thanks by Adv Veena Kumari from HRLN.

**PARTICIPANTS:**

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12.	Manpreet Kaur	9417529871
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25.	C.S. Baudha Jhansi	
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31.	Muskan	
32.	Gurdhyan Singh	9465670571
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