

GENDER IN FOCUS

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Dear Colleagues,

Warm greetings from IWWAGE!

I am delighted to share with you the eighth edition of “Gender in Focus,” the newsletter of the Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE). The “Gender in Focus” has been a cornerstone of our commitment to spotlighting on gender equality, with a focus on women in the labour force.

IWWAGE, set-up as an Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy, has been dedicated to strengthening social and economic policies for women’s empowerment through research, policy engagement and testing solutions. Over the past five years, we have established a strong identity and built extensive networks among government, civil society, practitioners, and researchers in India.

In April 2023, we celebrated our fifth anniversary with a significant policy and knowledge dissemination event, which underscored our leadership in the domain of women’s development and labour force participation. This milestone also has paved the way for our evolution from an initiative to an institute, and we have now re-branded ourselves as the **Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality**.

This edition of “Gender in Focus” explores key topics such as gender-based violence, empowering women in STEM and the care sector’s emerging priorities. It also features updates from our networks and coalitions. Each article reflects our collective effort to drive meaningful change and inspire action towards a more equitable society.

I invite you to share your thoughts, and join us in advocating for gender inclusive policies and practices. Together, we can amplify our impact and create lasting transformations. Thank you for your continued support and collaboration.

With best wishes,



Radha Chellapa,
Executive Director,
Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE)



From Initiative to Institute: IWWAGE's Path to Advancing Gender Equality

Commemorating Five Years of Pioneering Women's Economic Empowerment

IWWAGE, initially conceptualised as an Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy, aimed to strengthen and inform social and economic policies for women's economic empowerment through research, testing solutions, and advocacy over a five-year horizon from 2018 to 2023. Since its inception, IWWAGE has made significant strides in establishing its brand and identity among networks of government, civil society organisations, practitioners, and researchers working in the gender space in India.

Building on its efforts to transition evidence to policy action, IWWAGE celebrated its fifth anniversary by organising a day-long policy and knowledge dissemination event on women's labour force participation on April 24, 2023. The event was attended by all IWWAGE stakeholders, including partners, eminent government officials and policymakers, CSOs, grassroots organisations, academicians, multilateral organisations, and networks and coalitions of which IWWAGE is a part. The event was graced by a keynote address delivered by the Chief

Economic Advisor to the Government of India, Dr. V Ananthnarayan. The programme also included eminent speakers such as Dr. Shamika Ravi, Member of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council, and Ms. Nita Kejrewal, erstwhile Joint Secretary, Rural Livelihoods at the Ministry of Rural Development, along with other renowned scholars, experts, and practitioners. This event was critical in establishing IWWAGE's leadership in the public domain of women, development, and labour. It paved the way for IWWAGE's transition from an initiative to an institute.

This new phase marks the expansion of work to include the private sector and industry leaders and to address subjects linked to women's economic empowerment, aiming to achieve the larger goal of gender equality. This also involves the development of a broader vision and mission, backed by strategic goals and a renewed plan of action. With these changes, IWWAGE has now been rebranded as the Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality.

Voices from the field



Breaking the Silence: DAY-NRLM's Crusade Against Gender-Based Violence

Empowering Women and Gender-Diverse Individuals Through Awareness, Reporting, and Redressal Mechanisms

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a serious global issue that affects one in three women in their lifetime. Violence against women and girls remains one of the biggest deterrents to achieving well-being, self-growth, and a life of dignity. Physical or psychological violence is a gross violation of basic human rights and impedes women and girls from achieving their full potential and living a life of their choice. Evidence reveals that women are often unable to identify violence inflicted on them due to the normalisation of discrimination and violence. Even if they do identify violence, they are often unable to raise their voices against it to avoid shame and stigma, and they continue to suffer in silence. Most women are largely unaware of redress mechanisms, service providers, and legal rights.

The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) has been actively working towards addressing issues of inequities and advancing gender equality through targeted gender interventions since 2016. Based on

the principles of social and economic empowerment, the gender programme under DAY-NRLM has been building institutional mechanisms at the community level to respond to gender issues. However, a significant challenge that persists despite these efforts is GBV, which continues to undermine the self-development, well-being, and dignity of women and girls. Recognising the impact of GBV both at the individual and societal levels, DAY-NRLM is committed to undertaking necessary actions to eliminate this pervasive issue.

To this end, DAY-NRLM launched an annual month-long Gender Campaign, Naya Chetna, in November, 2022, to create awareness among various stakeholders about GBV and other gender issues. This annual campaign, announced under the aegis of the Ministry of Rural Development, aims to ensure that women and other gender-diverse individuals acknowledge that GBV needs public action and work towards building institutional platforms to address GBV. The campaign, launched on November 25,

2022 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women), lasted until December 23, 2022. In its first year, the National Gender Campaign against gender-based violence mobilised 35 million people across the country around the cause of gender equality and women's empowerment, focusing on gender-based violence. The campaign adopted a 'Jan Andolan' or people's movement approach, involving state governments, line ministries, grassroots organisations, and communities. The implementation strategy ensured that the campaign reached the remotest areas and most marginalised groups.

The second phase of the five-year campaign was launched on November 23, 2023 with the goal of advancing the agency and rights of women and gender-diverse individuals by addressing structural barriers to dignified living without fear, discrimination, and violence based on gender and intersectional identities. The campaign has been aptly given the taglines 'Sahenge Nahin Kahenge' and 'Chuppi Todenge'. Shri Faggan Singh Kulaste, the Hon'ble Minister of State for Rural Development and Steel, and Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti, the Hon'ble Minister of State for Rural Development and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, inaugurated the campaign in New Delhi. Shri Shailesh Kumar Singh, Secretary of Rural Development; Shri Charanjit Singh, Additional Secretary of Rural Livelihoods; Ms. Smriti Sharan, Joint Secretary of Rural Livelihoods; and Dr. Shamika Ravi, Member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, along with dignitaries and representatives from the State

Livelihoods Mission, the banking community, development partners and CSOs, and SHG members from across the country were also present at the occasion.

The theme of the campaign was enhancing awareness, reporting, safe redressal, and convergence. *Nayi Chetna 2.0* also aimed to deepen awareness on 1) understanding different forms of violence across life stages and contexts 2) encourage GBV reporting 3) forge convergence to strengthen safe redressal.

IWWAGE produced several key outputs, including a year-one assessment report, a year-one snapshots coffee table book, and a year-one video highlighting the campaign's activities.

The campaign engages a diverse group of stakeholders, including State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs), community institutions, Panchayati Raj Institutions, community members, DAY-NRLM verticals, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and various line Ministries and Departments. IWWAGE produced several key outputs, including a year-one assessment report, a year-one snapshots coffee table book, and a year-one video highlighting the campaign's activities and featuring interviews with officials and community members. These outputs were launched by the Hon'ble Minister of State at the campaign's launch event. For two years consecutively IWWAGE proudly partnered with the Ministry on creating collaterals such as an animated video on redressal mechanism for GBV, case studies report, design & coordination of all social media dissemination posts and also led the onboarding as well as supervision of the Management Information System (MIS) used for all data collection of the campaign, documentation/ assessment report, video of year one snapshots.



Emerging Priorities in the Care Sector: Opportunities for India's G20 Presidency

Addressing the Challenges and Importance of Care Work in Women's Economic Participation and Policy Making

Care work –paid and unpaid – plays a significant role in the wellbeing and functioning of economies and societies. A large part of this work is primarily borne by women across the world; it is guided by existing social norms and is a continuing consequence of the gendered division of labour. It has often been considered one of the primary barriers to accessing labour markets by women globally.

Various challenges around care work have come to the forefront in the context of framing the women-led development agenda at the G20. The major issues that need utmost priority that were to be highlighted during India's G20 presidency are put together and discussed in this short brief prepared by Dr. Sona Mitra, Director- Policy & Research, IWWAGE and Sruthi Kutty, Program Manager, IWWAGE. The Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE) along with the Institute for Human

Development (IHD) organised a roundtable discussion on "Integrating care work into India's G20 priorities" at the Indian Society of Labour Economics (ISLE) conference in March, 2023 and this brief is an outcome of the discussions at the ISLE conference. It talks about how care is a sector in itself and there is a need for investments in care infrastructure requirements, and for care workers. It also sheds light on the measurements issues that arise when measuring 'care work' highlighting underestimation of work performed by women, reflecting lower Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR), by using the standard tools applied in the national labour force survey. Measurement of women's work that includes all forms of care and unpaid activities also constitutes a critical component of policy decisions on data collections for a more gender equal world, especially in the context of recognising women's contributions to care.

[READ THE BRIEF HERE](#)



Closing the gap

Breaking Barriers and Bridging Gaps: Empowering Women in India's STEM Landscape

Addressing Challenges and Fostering Inclusivity for Women in Science and Technology in India

The third brief in the “Women and the Future of Work” series stems from secondary research and a roundtable stakeholder discussion held on October 05, 2023 at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. Women and girls in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields in India have made significant strides in recent years but still face various challenges and disparities. According to a UNESCO report, only 35 per cent of students in higher education worldwide are women. Their low participation in STEM is a global problem, with women constituting less than 30 per cent of the world's STEM researchers. In 2019, the number of women faculty in STEM in India was about 14 per cent.

Given that the labour market is constantly changing and evolving, especially due to automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI), STEM education enables women to keep up with this transformation by giving them transferable skills. In India, since the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020, the prominence of STEM and technology occupations has considerably expanded, growing by approximately 37 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively. Beyond employment opportunities, STEM education is also becoming increasingly important from a

human development perspective. Skills such as logical reasoning, promoted within experiential learning pedagogies, enable children to become adults with a broader range of skills, and with the ability to solve complex real-life problems.

Furthermore, STEM education is a critical component for addressing pertinent policy problems, such as the climate crisis. Women's participation in formulating policies and interventions using their STEM and problem-solving skills can help make the response to such crises more gender responsive. Globally, ensuring gender equality in STEM can help create a more balanced environment that could contribute to closing the skills gap between males and females, enhancing the employment rate of women, and reducing occupational segregation.

Overall, while there have been positive developments in encouraging women and girls to pursue STEM in India, there is still much work to be done to achieve gender equity and inclusivity in these fields. Continued efforts to address barriers and create a supportive environment for women in STEM are essential for harnessing their full potential and driving innovation and progress in India's science and technology sectors.

[READ THE BRIEF HERE](#)

Closing the Gender Gap in Apprenticeships: Strategies for Inclusive Skill Development

Strategies and Recommendations for Enhancing Female Participation in India's Apprenticeship Programmes

The National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) and the National Apprentice Training Scheme (NATS) are government initiatives aimed at improving skill development and increasing employment opportunities. However, the latest NAPS data reveals that an overwhelming majority of apprentices are male, constituting approximately 70-75 per cent, indicating a lack of gender responsiveness in the scheme and its implementation. This brief emerged from secondary research and a roundtable stakeholder discussion held on July 13, 2023, at the India International Centre, New Delhi. To bridge this gender gap, several recommendations were proposed at the roundtable.

First, collecting gender-disaggregated data can help understand skilling from women's perspectives, including their needs, challenges, and opportunities.

Second, incentivising employers to hire more women apprentices and providing additional allowances can encourage greater female participation. For instance, in Tanzania, the Structured Engineers Apprenticeship Program (SEAP) provided female participants with subsistence allowances, additional training, and mentorship opportunities with follow-up after they achieved professional registration. Records show that female apprentices with funding and complementary support had a much higher completion rate (86 per cent) than those who were self-supported (20 per cent).

Third, awareness campaigns targeted at women can help increase their understanding and interest in apprenticeship programmes. To overcome social inhibitors, a bottom-up approach to skilling could lead to improved results. Such a strategy could involve using local school/college leaders and self-help group leaders to identify women workers and help them register as apprentices. Local

social media influencers can also be engaged for information campaigns. Additionally, they can help dispel stereotypes about women in work, especially in male-dominated sectors, and encourage families to support women seeking employment.

Fourth, creating gender-sensitive infrastructure and addressing social norms that inhibit women's participation will create a more inclusive environment. Women apprentices face numerous challenges, including the lack of mobility options while travelling to remote locations for work, the absence of adequate, functional toilets at the workplace, the lack of counselling and orientation during their apprenticeships, difficulties in managing work alongside family responsibilities and childcare obligations, and the perception of workplaces as male-dominated, with many more male trainers than females.

Finally, integrating NAPS onto the upcoming DESH Stack portal can enhance women's access to employment opportunities and streamline their transition to the labour market. Implementing these recommendations will lead to a more gender-inclusive apprenticeship system, promoting economic growth and prosperity for women.

Bringing gender sensitivity to apprenticeship programmes to cater to women's needs and encourage their participation is of paramount importance. Additionally, it is equally important to focus on expanding the overall scope and availability of apprenticeships across various sectors and industries.

To access more information on this topic and for recommendations to enhance apprenticeship opportunities and promote equitable participation, particularly focusing on expanding the scope of apprenticeships across sectors and industries and ensuring greater inclusivity for all genders.

[READ THE BRIEF HERE](#)



Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms to Combat Gender-Based Violence under DAY-NRLM: Insights from the Fourth Gender Samvaad

The fourth Gender Samvaad, held on September 22, 2023, was co-organised by Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) and the Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE). The virtual event attracted over 91,000 participants, including senior officials from various ministries, state government officials, practitioners, gender experts, academics, civil society actors, community members, and self-help group (SHG) members.

Keynote speaker Shri Charanjit Singh, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Rural Development, expressed concern over gender-based violence (GBV) statistics and emphasised the role of community-based institutions in addressing this issue. He advocated for inter-ministerial collaboration, particularly with the Ministries of Information and Broadcasting and Education, to enhance awareness and sensitisation efforts.

Ms. Smriti Sharan, Joint Secretary of DAY-NRLM, highlighted the organisation's efforts to empower women and create model institutions addressing women's issues in rural areas, particularly through Gender Resource Centres (GRCs). Community resource persons from states like Jharkhand, Kerala, and Odisha shared their experiences with institutional strategies to combat GBV. Smt Rajani Dandasena from Odisha discussed the effective functioning of Prerna Kendras (GRCs) at the Gram Panchayat level, which have successfully addressed various cases of violence through strong departmental linkages and widespread awareness campaigns.

The event also featured a panel discussion with participants from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, gender experts, and women's rights lawyers. They emphasised the importance of State Rural Livelihoods Missions (SRLMs), legal remedies, gender training, and inter-ministerial convergence. The discussion covered innovative financing for sustainability, creating safe spaces like Shakti Sadan and short stay homes, and enhancing data-driven governance and women's economic agency. The session underscored the potential for convergence between Naari Adalats under Mission Shakti and GRCs under DAY-NRLM.

Gender Samvaad 2023 concluded with a call for collective action to address women's issues through preventive measures, convergence, and innovative local approaches.

[READ THE ARTICLE HERE](#)



G20 Thematic Workshop on Nari Shakti: Towards Women-Led Development organised by NITI Aayog and IWWAGE

On November 8, 2023, a workshop on the theme “Nari Shakti: Towards Women-Led Development” was held in New Delhi, organised by NITI Aayog in collaboration with the Institute of What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE). This workshop was part of a series aimed at implementing action items from the New Delhi Leaders’ Declaration 2023 (NDLD 2023).

Key Themes and Discussions

1. Enhancing Women’s Economic and Social Empowerment:
 - Focus on increasing women’s labour force participation and addressing gender disparities in domestic and care work.
 - Discussions on the gig economy, bridging gender skill gaps, and promoting supportive workplaces.
 - Emphasis on the private sector’s role in enhancing and retaining the female workforce.
2. Strengthening Women’s Collectives:
 - Sharing best practices and scaling strategies for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Women-led Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs).
 - Developing leadership abilities among rural women to foster economic empowerment.
3. Bridging Digital and Skilling Gaps:
 - Enhancing women’s access to digital skills and infrastructure for secure and inclusive participation in the digital economy.
 - Promoting women’s entrepreneurship and participation in non-traditional sectors.
4. Legal Safeguards for Women’s Empowerment:
 - Prioritising women’s safety through improved public infrastructure and effective implementation of gender-friendly laws.
 - Developing gender-disaggregated data for evidence-based policies.

Inaugural Remarks and Key Insights

- Dr. V.K. Paul, Member, NITI Aayog: Highlighted the importance of women-led development, citing low female labour force participation and the need for an enabling ecosystem.
- Dr. Preetam B Yashvant, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development: Emphasised the shift towards women as active participants in development and the significance of women-led initiatives showcased through public participation.
- Dr. Sandhya Purecha, Chairperson, W20 India: Stressed the moral obligation of women-led development for an equitable society.

Outcomes

The workshop facilitated collaboration among experts, academics, civil society, and think tanks to design a roadmap for comprehensive gender equality and empowerment. It underscored the necessity of multi-faceted strategies, inter-ministerial convergence, and community-based approaches to promote women-led development.

Conclusion

The workshop on “Nari Shakti: Towards Women-led Development” provided a significant platform for addressing various dimensions of women’s empowerment, aligning national agendas with global priorities, and reinforcing the commitment to gender equality in India.

[READ THE ARTICLE HERE](#)





The Ministry of Rural Development and IWWAGE jointly organised a two-day Consultative Workshop on Gender Resource Centre

The Ministry of Rural Development and IWWAGE jointly organised a two-day Consultative Workshop on Gender Resource Centre in New Delhi on July 27 and 28, 2023. In his keynote address, Shri Charanjit Singh, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development mentioned that since 2016, DAY NRLM has targeted intervention for mainstreaming gender within the program with the goal to strengthen the voice, choice and agency of women. To respond to the issues of gender specific entitlements and rights, a need was felt for establishing a structure like Gender Resource Centre to find resolution for a varied range of complex cases that demand interlinkages with other departments.

Setting the context for the workshop, Smt. Smriti Sharan, Joint Secretary, shared that the DAY-NRLM has initiated a silent revolution in the country and that its transformative approach is premised on the principles of creating women-led and women-owned institutions. She shared that the two basic principles of the DAY-NRLM program are social empowerment and economic empowerment of the rural poor women. The Joint Secretary further stated that the establishment of GRC has been a landmark achievement for the program reaffirming DAY-NRLMs commitment to the mandate of women empowerment. Ms. Sharon Buteau, Executive Director of LEAD at Krea University underscored the importance of evidence generation in identifying key elements for interventions.

A total of 75 participants from 15 states along with CSO partners and gender experts participated in the workshop. The deliberations in the workshop highlighted the major components for strengthening Gender Resource Centre through a

participatory group work. The enriching experiences from the participating State viz. Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Nagaland, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Kerala, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Tripura re-emphasise the efforts that are required for strengthening the Gender Resource Centre in the country.

The closing remarks by Joint Secretary, Smt. Smriti Sharan, laid out that the discussions have helped us reflect on the present scope of the GRC and ambit of work that lies in front of us. She also added that if GRCs are envisioned as the apex body of the community institutions at the Block level, then its role should also be of a higher order. She also emphasised that it is much larger than just addressing cases - it is about combatting gender inequality through a holistic approach.



Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE) and Indian Association for Women's Studies (IAWS) Panel on Strengthening the Voices of Care Workers in India

On September 7, 2023, the Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE) collaborated with the Indian Association for Women's Studies (IAWS) during their 17th National Conference in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. A panel discussion focused on women workers in the care sector, a crucial yet often overlooked segment of the economy. Chaired by Ritu Dewan (Vice President, ISLE) and introduced by Bidisha Mondal (Research Fellow, IWWAGE-LEAD at Krea University), the panel included Dr. Dipa Sinha, Sonia George, Kiran Moghe, and AR Sindhu. The session concluded with remarks from Ishita Mukhopadhyay (President, IAWS). The discussion highlighted the significant role of care workers, especially in rural India, and addressed the challenges they face, including unpaid and underpaid labour and lack of formal employment recognition. A notable achievement discussed was the rise in union activities among care workers, contributing to their fight for labour rights.

The extensive question-and-answer session following the panel discussion brought several critical issues to the forefront. Topics included old age care, sexual harassment faced by domestic workers, the impact of invasive technologies on care workers, and discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic. These discussions underscored the need for enhanced policies and mechanisms to support care workers, providing an invaluable platform for further discourse and action on these pressing issues. The conference emphasised the importance of recognising and empowering care workers through unionization and policy reforms to address their welfare and rights effectively.

Technology Driven Approaches to Women's Economic Empowerment – Successes and Challenges at IAFFE 2023

Technology holds the promise of improving women's labour market status and empowering them in terms of enhancing their incomes, creating income-generating opportunities, and facilitating access to public services and social protection measures in the current world system. This is true especially in the post COVID-19 world where technology is heralded as a panacea for the challenges faced by women workers. The newly emerging digitised platform work have opened opportunities for women's engagements. Digitised platforms are being used for delivery of government services, effective governance for tracking service delivery mechanisms and improving the efficacy of programmes by providing newer avenues to access information, services, and markets. It has also created scope for further strengthening women's integration with technology and digital systems to improve their life, labour and well-being.

This session proposed four presentations on the different forms in which digital technology is enabling women's economic empowerment in India. The papers critically examined the technology driven approach and highlighted the successes, challenges and shortfalls of integrating women within a digital economy. The first two papers looked at the conditions of women workers, emerging forms of organising the work using platforms and used both the employee/partners' and the employer's perspectives in building the narratives. The papers highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of such work in specific sectors like domestic work, beauty services, ecommerce, food deliveries, education services, etc. The third paper focussed on the role of a digitised approach to last mile service delivery of critical social protection measures and its impact on women. The last paper examined the impact of the changing nature of work performed by the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers in India due to the adoption of digitised practices of data collection and service deliveries. The papers use both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches for the studies.



Panel on “Advancing Women’s Work in Global South: Towards Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality” at the IHD Global Conclave 2024

IWWAGE along with Niti Aayog organised a panel on “Advancing Women’s Work in Global South: Towards Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality” at the Global Conclave organised by the Institute of Human Development on January 12, 2024 at the India International Centre. The panel was chaired by Dr. Sonalde Desai, and included presentations by a diverse group of speakers offering a comprehensive panorama of the intricate landscape surrounding women’s work on a global scale. Sakshi Khurana, Senior Specialist at NITI Aayog, illuminated the gender disparities prevalent in labour force participation, wage pay, and managerial roles, drawing attention to the transformative impact of digital technologies on women. Wei-Jun Jean Yeung provided an insightful analysis of the Asia-Pacific region, detailing economic dynamics, gender parity trends, and the varied challenges confronting women in the region. Marina Durano delved into the constitutional recognition of care work, shedding light on the evolving discourse around the right to work within the framework of a care economy. Sona Mitra’s focus on the declining Female Labour Force Participation Rate in India highlighted the qualitative distinctions in women’s work, with an emphasis on care and unpaid activities. Kyoko Kusakabe’s case study on Thailand explored the nuanced effects of automation and digitisation on women’s roles in the workforce. Grace Wamue-Ngare offered a lens into the persistent gender disparities in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly through the lens of initiatives by the KU-WEE Hub in Kenya aimed at dismantling barriers to Women’s Economic Empowerment. Together, these presentations weaved a rich tapestry that underscore the imperative for nuanced, context-specific strategies to bolster women’s economic participation, acknowledging regional nuances and the intersectional challenges that women face globally.



Promoting Women in Leadership for Improving Economic Outcomes, IWWAGE at Access Livelihoods Summit 2024

During the Livelihoods India Summit 2024, Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE) organised a panel discussion session on **Promoting Women in Leadership for Improving Economic Outcomes on January 18, 2024, in New Delhi**. The session contributed to the current discourse on 'women in leadership', what it entails, and highlighted measures that cover organisational strategies and best practices to accelerate women's leadership.

The goal of ushering in women-led development requires concerted efforts on multiple fronts. Facilitating and enabling women in leadership positions can cause significant shifts in improving women's economic outcomes using modern feminist methods.

The proportion of women in leadership roles is low in India. For example, a report by Dasra found that women's workforce occupies only 18 per cent of leadership roles in India's healthcare sector, earning 34 per cent less than their male counterparts. Another survey from Grant Thornton found that women hold 36 per cent of senior management positions in mid-market companies in India. Creating an enabling ecosystem for women to transition into key decision making and leadership roles is critical not only from the point of view of diversity and inclusion but is also necessary for strengthening alternative forms of leadership that are starkly different from traditional approaches.

Enabling women leaders in politics, economics, finance, businesses, social sectors and so on, is crucial for institutionalizing gender-responsive mechanisms that cater to the needs of women in all sectors of the economy and facilitates in closing the rigid gender gaps. Women's leadership has evidence of creating systems that operate to include and facilitate women not only in their productive spheres but adds to it by creating 'caring' spaces.

This panel aimed to contribute to the current discourse on 'women in leadership', what it entails, highlight measures that cover organisational strategies, market-based approaches and brings to the fore some of the existing knowledge and best practices from select sectors that accelerate women's leadership.





Feminist Policy Collective (National-Level Coalition)

IWWAGE is on the steering committee of the Feminist Policy Collective (FPC). IWWAGE has been organising pre-budget consultations in collaboration with FPC since 2019, to consolidate recommendations for the Union Budget. We plan to do so in the coming year as well.



Asia Feminist Coalition (Regional Coalition):

The priorities identified by the coalition include unpaid and care work, gender responsive budgeting and climate justice. IWWAGE is also collaborating with the coalition members in putting together panel discussions and other platforms for dialogue in the upcoming year; for example at the World Social Forum 2024 in Kathmandu, Nepal, and at AWID's 15th International Forum in Bangkok, Thailand, slated for December 2024.



WeProsper (Global Coalition on WEE)

IWWAGE plans to collaborate with WeProsper and the Asia Foundation towards developing a joint strategy to engage with the G20 process focusing on highlighting unpaid care work closer to the G20 summit in September 2023. In addition, as co-chair of the technical working group, IWWAGE will also contribute towards co-curating and facilitating meetings of the working group, and use the space to highlight its research outputs, co-author policy briefs to establish its credibility in advancing the WEE agenda.



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IWWAGE is an initiative of LEAD at Krea University. LEAD is a part of IFMR Society with strategic oversight from Krea University.
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